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THE LIMAMU AND HIS PEOPLE.

TRAVELS AND LIFE IN ASHANTI AND JAMAN

BY

Richard Austin Freeman
Late Assistant Colonial Surgeon, and Anglo-German
Boundary Commissioner of the Gold Coast

WITH ABOUT ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS BY
THE AUTHOR AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
AND TWO MAPS

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INTRODUCTION

THE region which is described in the following pages has, during the last three or four years, been the scene of a number of stirring events and has undergone a series of changes which have succeeded one another with kaleidoscopic suddenness and rapidity.

Since my visit to Bontúku, that city has been occupied by the forces of Samory, and, moreover, it has been declared to be within the French sphere of influence, so that it will probably not be again visited by an Englishman, at any rate in time of peace: while Ashanti, which at the period of my journey was an independent state, with its king, its court, its army and its various national institutions, shorn indeed, of much of its former glory, but still unchanged in all essentials, has since been absorbed into a British colony, its monarchy abolished, its army disbanded and its native institutions partially replaced by those of Europe. With the abolition of native rule there can be no doubt that the opportunity of the scientific traveller or anthropologist to study this interesting and remarkable people has almost completely passed away.

Henceforward their religious rites will be performed in secret and their laws administered secretly or partially

replaced by those of the white rulers; while the distinctive arts of the country, hitherto mainly fostered by the magnificence of the court and the love of gorgeous display on the part of the royal personages and chiefs, finding no occasion for their exercise, must inevitably die out.

Hence any records of travel in Ashanti before its annexation, or descriptions of the people or the towns at that period, must be of some value, and this will become more evident if we consider the extreme poverty of the literature relating to the country and its inhabitants. In 1819, Bowdich, who was the first European to visit Kumasi, published his "Mission to Ashantee," a work which contains practically all that is known of the laws, customs, religion and arts of the Ashantis. Hutchison, who was British Resident at Kumasi in 1817—18, published a small work of no interest, and Dupuis, who was British Consul at Kumasi in 1820, wrote a more pretentious book which contained little that was new and much that was inaccurate.

In 1841, a work of no special interest was published by Beecham and in 1844 there appeared a description of a journey to Kumasi by the Rev. T. B. Freeman (to whom the King of Ashanti granted a portion of land in Kumasi as the site for a church and residence). The Ashanti war of 1873 produced a crop of books, mostly by war correspondents and military officers who served in the campaign: some of which were excellent compilations, while others furnished admirable descriptions of the campaign, but naturally, none contained any new information relating to the Ashantis.

In 1893 there appeared a most admirable, minute and impartial history of the Gold Coast by Colonel A. B. Ellis, containing much historical matter relating to Ashanti, extracted from older works and official records. The recent expedition has also given rise to one or two books, and with these the list of literature dealing with Ashanti may be said to be complete.

The appearance of this book is therefore justified by the extreme paucity of our information relating to Ashanti and by the certainty that this information will not be greatly augmented in the future. Moreover, of the city of Bontúku and the country lying between it and Kumasi no descriptions have been published in English with the exceptions of the official report of the late Captain Lonsdale and a paper contributed by me to the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society in 1892. A portion of this tract of country is now within the British territories and this fact invests it with a certain interest for that portion of the public not directly concerned in purely geographical matters.

I have to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance that I have received in the preparation of this book: to the editors of the *Times*, the *Field* and *Black and White*, I am indebted for their permission to make use of articles and illustrations contributed by me to their columns: to the Royal Geographical Society for their permission to reproduce the map contributed by me to the supplementary papers of their Proceedings: to Dr. Patrick Manson for furnishing me with an account of his most recent work in relation to the

malarial organism: to Captain J. I. Lang, R.E., C.M.G., F.R.G.S., for the loan of a number of photographs by which my material for illustration has been supplemented: and to the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, for permission to reproduce a drawing by the late G. E. Ferguson which was contained in a report on a mission to Atabubu.

In the Map, one or two errors in the spelling of names escaped my notice until it was too late to make a correction: thus Jáman appears in the customary but incorrect form of "Gaman". Bori appears spelt in the now fashionable style "Buale", as the word is, in fact, pronounced by some Africans foreign to the district. These niceties of orthography are of little general interest, but I mention the matter in case there should appear any discrepancy between the text and the map.

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Boundaries according to most recent Treaties
Meridian of 0 Greenwich
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DAGARTI
WA
FRENCH PROTECTORATE
BONA
GONJA
BUALE
DAGOMBA
NEUTRAL TERRITORY
BIMBLA
GERMAN TOGOLAND
BONTUKU
FULA
BRONG
KUMAU
WAHU
ASHANTI
KUMASSI
SEFWI
DENKERA
ADANSI
AKIM
BRUSSA
WASSAW
TUFEL
ASSIN
FANTI
APOLLONIA
AHANTA
ADANGME
ACCRA, AKRA
CAPE COAST CASTLE
Christiansborg
Yendi
Salaga
Kintampo
Bontuku
Bismarckburg
Misahöhe
Black Volta
White Volta
Kitta

TRAVELS AND LIFE

IN

ASHANTI AND JAMAN

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

OBJECT of the Expedition—Author appointed Medical Officer—Arrival at Cape Coast—Instructions arrive—My carriers—Kwaku Saki—Joseph Fynn—His cheerful disposition—Distributing the loads—Under way—The country around Cape Coast—Birds—Sensitive Mimosa—Ogua Kuma—My companions—Change in character of country—Dunkwa—An alarm—Approaching the Forest—The Oil Palm—The Bamboo—Mansu—A remarkable Fungus—An Earth-worm—Assin-Yan-Kumasi—Pra-Su—The Pra.

WHEN I returned to the Gold Coast towards the end of the year 1888, after an absence of six months on leave, I found that an expedition was about to start for the far interior, its destination being Bontúku, the capital of the Kingdom of Jáman.[1] This city had at that time been visited by only one European, the late Captain Lonsdale,

[1] This name is generally spelt on the maps "Gaman," after Lonsdale, as I suppose, whose reason for spelling it in this way I do not understand. By the Basel missionaries, in their works on the local languages, it is spelt "Gyaman," and the reason of this is quite obvious. Nearly all the information respecting Jáman which has reached the coast has been obtained from Wongaras, by whom the sound of the English "J" is invariably converted at the commencement of a word into the sound of "Gy": thus, Jáman becomes Gyaman; Jenne becomes Gyenne; Julasu, Gyulasu, etc.

whose rough sketch of his route left its exact position somewhat uncertain, and thus to the other attractions of the expedition was added that of an unexplored route and a destination of uncertain whereabouts. Moreover, the expedition was to pass through Kumasi,—a place of much greater interest then than now—where a short stay was to be made.

The object of the expedition, which was not at the time made generally known, was to take over the kingdom of Jáman as part of the British Protectorate. This step was taken by the Government in consequence of the appearance at Cape Coast of certain persons who stated that they had been sent by King Ajiman of Jáman to entreat that his country might be taken under British protection: and one of them, a sturdy, handsome young man named Koffi Dabbi, afterwards accompanied the expedition as guide.

In addition to this mission there was some business of a somewhat delicate character to be transacted with the new King of Ashanti, Osai Kwaku Dua III (or Prempeh, as he has since been more generally called), the nature of which was briefly as follows.—Prempeh had recently been elected King of Ashanti, but had not yet been placed on the gold stool. Now this gold stool was, in function, similar to the ancient coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, or perhaps I should rather say, to the "Scone stone" which is built into it. Until the king had been enthroned on the gold stool his title was not officially recognised, and he was unable to draw from the royal treasury at Bántama. But

the ceremony of "stooling" a new king was one that involved considerable expense, and this Prempeh was not in a position to meet. From this dilemma he asked the British Government to extricate him by lending him four hundred pounds; but he desired that the loan should be made secretly and all knowledge of it kept from his people, who might, perhaps, have objected to the arrangement. To this request the Government had decided to accede, and the officer in charge of the mission was commissioned to signify this to the king and pay the money.

It will thus be seen that this expedition held out numerous and great attractions to persons interested in geographical research, and, as the post of medical officer was still vacant, (the surgeons previously appointed having been withdrawn in consequence of sickness) I volunteered for the special service and, to my great satisfaction, was accepted, and ordered to join the expedition at Cape Coast without delay. I had fortunately provided myself with surveying and astronomical instruments and was thus in a position to carry out the Governor's special instructions to me, which were to the effect that I should fix the positions of all important towns by astronomical observation, construct a map of the route, and collect information relating to the natural history and resources of the country.

The beginning of December found me on board the S. S. Niger, proceeding in leisurely fashion from the headquarters (Accra) to Cape Coast, where the expedition was awaiting my arrival, and after a couple of pleasant lazy

days on board ship I awoke in the morning to find that we were at anchor in Cape Coast Roads. Then came the passage ashore in the surf-boat, with all my worldly goods piled up behind me, while the canoe-men sang with a curious nasal intonation, as they dug their paddles into the seething water—

> "White man come again, come again, come again,
> Bime' by he come again, Hooroo mastah!"

a ditty that, if it has nothing else to recommend it, states a sound and truthful generalisation; for the white man usually does "come again," drawn by the almost irresistible fascination of this apparently repellent region, until he finally takes up his abode under a neat little mound of sandy earth, with a prickly pear growing out of it.

The few days that I spent at Cape Coast, in the quarters of my old mess-mate Mr. Commissioner Rayner (now one of the Colonial Judges), were days of feverish activity and excitement not unmixed with anxiety, for I was haunted by a continual fear that I should be recalled to Accra and replaced by some unwilling colleague, and felt that I should not be really safe until I was fairly on the road. The expedition had been delayed, first at Accra and then at Cape Coast, week after week, and change after change had been made in its officers, and even when I joined, no definite date had been fixed for the start. And meanwhile officers and men chafed with impatience at the delay, and murmured and growled as the dry season passed on and still they remained at Cape Coast. But the day after my

arrival the final instructions came, fixing the 8th of December as the date of our start for the interior, and forthwith the spirits of all the members of the force revived.

During the brief time that remained, I found ample employment in putting my Coast kit into store, purchasing tinned provisions and other necessaries for the journey and in engaging carriers and hammock-men; while the evenings were spent in farewell junketings with my friends in the town and at the Castle.

My outfit here received the addition of a fine whole-plate photographic set, most generously lent to me by Mr. Francis Macan of Cape Coast, and, as my own apparatus turned out to be defective, I have every reason to be grateful to him.

The 8th of December at length arrived, and was ushered in at day-break by a most prodigious beating of drums and squeaking of fifes on the part of our band (which consisted of six boys and a band-master, wielding collectively five fifes and two side-drums). I did not propose to start with the main body of the expedition as I had some further arrangements to make respecting the transport of my baggage, but I rose and watched the men assemble and march off, the drums still rattling and the fifes tootling with unabated vigour. As these martial sounds died away I went in and joined my host at breakfast, the last meal that I was to take amidst civilized surroundings for several months.

By seven o'clock all my carriers—somewhere about thirty in number—were collected around the gate of the hospital

compound, waiting with some little anxiety to have their burdens portioned out to them. In truth their anxiety was not without reason, for the occasion was for them a momentous one. Each carrier was now to receive a burden which for months to come would be always with him and would cling to him like the Old Man of the Sea.

It was certainly a very curious and miscellaneous crowd that I encountered as I approached the gate, for it contained specimens of nearly all the nationalities of West Africa, and afforded examples of every variety of costume in common use among the natives. And when one observed how extraordinarily simple were their preparations for the journey, it was impossible to avoid a certain sense of humiliation and an acknowledgment of the superiority of primitive man amidst his own surroundings; for, while the white man required his tent to sleep in, his changes of clothing and bedding, and his stores of preserved food, here was a man whose entire outfit for a journey, the duration of which was quite unknown to him, consisted of a ragged singlet and a large cotton pocket-handkerchief. He had "gone one better" than Diogenes, for he dispensed with the tub, and after all, had so much accommodation to spare that he could carry some of the impedimenta of his helpless white brother.

In this polyglot assemblage the E-fe race was represented by one Kwaku Saki, a lean, loose-jointed, grotesque-looking Ang-law,[1] who subsequently played the part of official

[1] Usually spelt on the maps "Awoona."

TRAVELLING HAMMOCK.

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jester to the expedition and (like many another jester) was only a fool in his professional capacity. Kwaku had known me previously at Ketta, in his native country (where he and three compatriots once carried me on their heads thirty miles, over the loose sand of the Bight of Benin, without a single halt, and were then quite fit and willing to go on for another thirty), and, as he expressed it, "he loved me too much." So when he descried me approaching the hospital, he leaped up from the ground and gave forth a yell of joy like the report of a seven-pounder, after which he executed one of his native dances in my honour, wriggled, grimaced, stuck out his elbows and flapped his enormous turbot-like feet in a way that called forth screams of delighted laughter from the rest of the carriers.

There were also several Fantis, one of whom, surnamed Mensa, was, like Kwaku, a great humourist, and lightened many a weary march with his "excellent fooling": for the rest, the crowd contained a pock-marked Accra man; a singularly graceful and good-looking Hausa youth who was known by the Ochi name of Nyami (God); an evil-looking Dagomba (who was not, however, a bad fellow) whose sinister countenance was decorated, after the fashion of his country, with a great variety of knife-cuts; a tall, lean Moshi, stately and statuesque, who carried on his long, shapely arms a number of hard-wood bracelets; and a tag-rag and bob-tail of assorted natives, including my personal servant, or steward, Joseph Fynn, (*alias* Kwasshi) a bullet-headed Cape Coast man.

Joe was in many respects a remarkable native. He was a close observer of men, both black and white, and often displayed a singularly clear understanding of character; but his most conspicuous peculiarity was his extreme risibility. He laughed continually on the slightest provocation, or without any provocation at all. If one looked at him he burst into a broad grin and chuckled aloud; if one spoke to him on any subject he was usually seized with convulsions of blubbering laughter, accompanied by heavings of the shoulders and inward gurglings like the sound of water bubbling from a narrow-necked bottle. He was a great rascal, and eventually left my service somewhat suddenly, when he departed in convulsions of laughter, with a considerable "unearned increment" in his box. But to return to the hospital gate. The distribution of the loads was a somewhat protracted business, for every man was naturally intent on securing the smallest and lightest load. Consequently, as each package was handed out through the gate it was eagerly examined by the crowd outside. If it was a large and heavy one, it was promptly dumped down on the ground and thenceforward ignored, while if it happened to be a light and handy package, its possession was contested with endless shouting, jabbering and gesticulating.

At last all the loads were appropriated with the exception of a few of the heaviest, and when these had been portioned out to the protesting remnant of the carriers, the arrangements were complete. The little caravan was formed up in line; compass, note-book and water-bottle were placed

conveniently for immediate use, and so, shaking hands with my colleague, Dr. Waldron, I turned from the hospital gate and proceeded on my way, the hammock-men, carriers and attendants following in my wake in single file, like the tail of a kite.

As we passed through the hot glowing streets of Cape Coast, between walls of dazzling white, and over roads of sparkling quartz, the day's business was already in full swing. The smiling, chattering market-women, gaily attired in bright-coloured country cloths and gaudy head-coverings, sat behind their stalls, now nearly emptied, and the Mahomedan merchants, in their frowsy white and blue tobes, squatted in their booths, stolidly chewing kola-nut, and stitching industriously at cotton caps and gowns.

In a quarter of an hour we reached an eminence at the outskirts of the town, and here we halted to look for the last time at the blue ocean, with the ships riding in the anchorage, the crowded red and white walled houses, the little whitewashed church tower, the clustering cocoa-nut palms, the brick-red battlements of the old castle, and the Union flag waving above them: then we descended into the hollow, and our journey was fairly commenced.

The sun was now high in the heavens and its rays were scorchingly hot, but this did not render walking by any means unpleasant. I think the fear of out-door exercise in the sun is one of the many hygienic mistakes that prevail in West Africa, and the almost universal obesity and want of "condition" that is observable among Europeans there,

is largely attributable to the prevalence of this delusion. As a matter of fact, if the body be well covered with white drill, and the head protected by a thick, wide helmet, there is little to fear from the West African sun; and the lightness of the clothing which so little impedes the movements of the body and the free action of the skin, which so greatly assists respiration, renders moderate exercise pleasant and invigorating.

The country around Cape Coast is characteristic of the litoral regions of the central Gold Coast: an open, rolling country clothed with a dense growth of dark-green bush which rises from ten to twenty feet. The soil is of the bright pinky-red colour so familiar to travellers in West Africa, and on its surface crystalline masses of quartz are thickly scattered. This red soil is derived from a red sandstone which is very widely distributed in this part of the continent. It is highly ferruginous and there occur in it large masses of ore which resemble the "clinkers" from an iron foundry. The percentage of the metal in these latter must be very high, for in passing over one of them, the south pole of the compass needle is drawn down until it touches the bottom of the bowl; and where portions of such masses project up in the road, their surfaces become quite polished and metallic-looking from the constant friction of the feet of wayfarers.

The scene around us was not highly picturesque or romantic, but it was very cheerful and gay; and I suppose my own elated spirits lent a charm to it, which at other

times and to other eyes it might not have possessed. The sky was an unbroken expanse of blue, and the landscape bathed in a flood of brilliant sunlight. Glittering, gorgeous-plumaged sun-birds—the humming-birds of the Old World—darted in and out among the foliage; small flocks of the pretty little scarlet cardinal-birds settled on the road and flew up at our approach; crowds of chattering weaver-birds flew around, and now and again we saw passing overhead the curious little Whydah (or widow) bird, with its preposterously long tail and its singular bounding flight.

Very noticeable among the herbage that fringed the roadside, was the little sensitive mimosa which is so common throughout the Gold Coast. This beautiful little plant grows in bushy masses up to a height of twelve inches; its fern-like leaves are of a light bluish-green, and it bears little inconspicuous yellow flowers. Its sensitiveness is extraordinary. At a touch the pinnules of its little feathery leaves fold up along the mid-rib, like the ribs of an umbrella on its stick, and if roughly handled the whole plant collapses into a bundle of stringy stalks. Even the passage of a small reptile or large insect through the plant produces a track of closed leaves, and at the slightest shower of rain the roadside verdure vanishes as if by magic.

For a couple of hours our party trudged along at a good swinging pace, now crossing a shallow valley, now mounting a low ridge; passing every few paces a high red ant-hill, on which the scarlet-headed blue-bodied Stellios were seen sunning themselves; seldom meeting any other

travellers on the road but the little striped Barbary mice, like Lilliputian zebras, who sat up in the middle of the path, watching our approach, and then, as we bore down on them, scampered off into the bush.

About half-past ten we reached the village of Ogúa Kuma,[1] where we found the remainder of the expedition. The portable table had been placed under the village shade-tree, and when I arrived, my two companions were already seated at it, waiting for lunch. We always took our meals in the open during the journey, for every village has its shade-tree—usually a species of *Ficus* of a spreading, mushroom-like habit, with dense, dark-green foliage—which gives complete shelter from the sun and even from moderate rain.

In half an hour the expedition was formed up and we resumed the march, the "band" playing us out of the village in grand style.

Our party consisted of about three hundred all told, exclusive of a number of women—the wives of some of our non-commissioned officers. There were three European officers: Inspector Lethbridge of the Gold Coast Constabulary, who was in command and held the temporary post of Special Commissioner for Native Affairs; Assistant-Inspector Ewart, who was in charge of the escort, and myself, in the capacity of medical officer, surveyor and naturalist.

I shall refer as little as possible in this narrative to the

[1] Ogúa is the native name for the town of Cape Coast. Kuma is the Ochi for "little," Thus the village is "Little Ogua."

other European officers and their doings, my object being not so much to tell a story as to furnish an intelligible account of the country and its people; and in so doing I consider it better to confine myself to my own experiences and impressions.

We had one native commissioned-officer, Abdulai Futa by name, a very intelligent, trustworthy little man who subsequently became a great crony of mine: two or three sergeants-major: sergeants, corporals and privates of the Hausa Constabulary to the number of one hundred: a band which I have already described: a gunners' party with a rocket trough: an apothecary, apothecary's assistant, hospital orderly and two hundred carriers. The number of carriers may appear somewhat excessive, but it must be remembered that besides our personal baggage, provisions, tents and hospital stores, we had to take with us presents for native kings and chiefs, which consisted of folding chairs, umbrellas, cotton cloths and (I am ashamed to add) over seventy loads of excessively bad gin. Moreover, although our objects were entirely peaceful, we had to carry sufficient ammunition to enable us to take the offensive if necessary: so that a large number of cases of cartridges and war-rockets were added to our impedimenta.

From Ogúa Kuma we marched on to the village of Akroful, which we reached in about two hours, and here we halted for an hour's rest. Even in the short distance that we had travelled, already a distinct change in the character of the country was apparent.

The Silk-Cotton trees (*Bombax*), which immediately around Cape Coast were very sparsely scattered and of comparatively insignificant size, had become much more numerous, and the individual trees more noble in their proportions. The vegetation around was more luxuriant than on the extreme coast, and the air had an inland feel; but there was as yet nothing approaching the character of forest. After leaving Akroful, however, and towards Dunkwa, which formed our destination for the day, the trees became much more closely aggregated, and in places small copses were passed, in some of which I observed a kind of wild custard-apple growing.

About five o'clock the rear-guard, with which I was marching, entered the main street of Dunkwa. The escort and carriers had already fallen out, the baggage was stacked around the shade-tree, and a sentry posted by the ammunition cases. A fire had been lighted in the middle of the street, and a large kettle of the muddy water from an adjacent stream was already singing cheerfully.

Our three camp-chairs were placed round the table, on which our iron crockery and plates made quite an imposing show, and we sat and waited with no small impatience for the tea which was being prepared by our servants. When this beverage was produced, it was found necessary to allow the cups to stand for five minutes that the earthy sediment from the muddy water might completely settle; and then the cups had to be handled as gently as bottles of choice port, any carelessness in this respect resulting in a mouthful of mud.

After tea a most delightful hour was spent under the shade-tree. We had marched about twenty-four miles since the morning's start, and were sufficiently fatigued to be able to fully appreciate the luxury of a smoke and a gossip at the end of the day.

Dunkwa is a Fanti village of some importance and is historically interesting from the fact that it was the scene of the events that led to the first Ashanti war, and also of a great battle between the Ashantis and Fantis in 1872, when the latter were completely routed. Although it is so near to Cape Coast, very few white men pass through it, and hence the natives regarded us with a good deal of interest, and sat on the ground in a circle round our table while we drank our tea, watching us as though we were giving some sort of entertainment.

In the course of the evening the chief of the village paid us a visit and shewed us the quarters that were allotted to us. My bedroom was in a clean-looking, well-built house, with white-washed mud walls and a roof of grass thatch. The window, which was simply a hole in the wall, opened on to the main street and was of such a height from the ground that persons standing outside could lean their elbows upon the sill and take a full survey of my room. This apartment was about seven feet square, but small as it was, it was soon made to look quite cosy and homelike by the good offices of my faithful Joseph, who with many a guffaw of delight, turned out the contents of my kit bag, and produced therefrom a complete suite

of bedroom furniture; and by the time I came to turn in, the folding bedstead was set up, its cork mattress covered with a clean white sheet and guarded by the mosquito curtain, the stool placed by its side in lieu of a table, with a candle-lantern alight upon it; the folding washstand with the lid of my canteen for a wash-hand-basin, an india-rubber bucket full of water by its side, and towels, soap, tooth, nail and hair-brushes placed in readiness on its tray; and to crown all, half a palm-oil cask had been procured that I might have the morning tub in comfort. As I looked round the little apartment, I felt that my surroundings were positively luxurious, and turned in with that enjoyment of anticipated rest which is the peculiar reward of the tired traveller.

I did not, however, fall asleep directly, for in addition to the sense of novelty and strangeness that was in itself disturbing, a flood of brilliant moonlight poured through the window aperture into the room, and then as the sounds of the village gradually ceased and a profound stillness settled down on the place, various strange noises were wafted in from the bush on the cool land breeze, faint and indefinite at first, but becoming louder and more distinct as the night advanced. Presently, however, I began to doze, and was just dropping asleep when I was aroused with a start by a fearful yell. Wide awake, I sat up in bed and listened. The yell was repeated, and almost immediately followed by a series of screams, the most weird and terrible that I had ever heard, which seemed to come from the street on which my window opened.

I leaped out of bed and rushed to the door, where Joe was sleeping on a grass mat, and roused that worthy by a vigorous poke in the ribs. Joe sat up, rubbing his eyes, and regarded me with a look of reproach.

"Come, wake up," I expostulated; "don't you hear that shouting?" For the screams still continued and appeared to be coming nearer.

"Yass, Sah, I hear him."

"Well, what is it?"

Joseph looked up into my startled face for a moment, and then his shoulders began to heave and the familiar gurgling sound proceeded from his interior.

"What is it?" I repeated fiercely.

"Bush cat," replied Joseph, with a contemptuous snigger, "small bush cat, same like monkey," and here he was again overcome by the humour of the situation.

I listened to the sounds, which were now quite near, and certainly they had a less human character than at first; so, reassured that no murders were being committed in the village, I went back to bed and was soon fast asleep. I afterwards discovered that these screams, which we heard every night in the forest, were produced by that curious little lemur, the Potto.

When I awoke the next morning and raised my mosquito curtain, I was somewhat disconcerted to find that my window was entirely blocked up by a mass of woolly heads and black shoulders. A small crowd consisting chiefly of women and children, had collected round it, and craning their necks into the room, had been watching me as I slept.

They maintained their position and their interest in my doings while I arose, took my bath and washed; and watched with great curiosity the various garments with which I subsequently invested my person.

On this day (December 10th) the change in the character of the country began to be very pronounced, and as the trees increased in number, and the glare of the open bush was exchanged for the shade and relative coolness of the thin forest, the forms of life around exhibited a corresponding change.

The ground was covered by a dense growth of herbaceous plants; and ferns, which are never seen on the coast, appeared by the roadside and soon became quite abundant. The trees, becoming more closely aggregated, were bound together by creepers of all sizes from the thickness of twine to that of a hawser. Animal life in a like manner changed with the altered surroundings, and many forms that I had never met with in the open country of the coast began to appear in abundance. Butterflies, although it was the middle of the dry season, flitted across the road by hundreds; wasps and beetles droned through the air; dragon-flies and bright-coloured demoiselles darted along the path, with their jerky, spasmodic flight; molluscs crawled in the moist, bushy undergrowth, and the surface of every pond and stream was gay with merry parties of whirligig beetles *(Gyrinus)* whose glittering bodies flashed in the sun as they spun round and round in their mazy dance.

This part of the road—between Dunkwa and Mansu—is

extremely beautiful, for although the vegetation is not crowded together as in the dense forest, a fairly extensive view can be obtained; the trees are numerous enough to give a shady, sylvan aspect to the landscape, and although not so gigantic as further north, their noble proportions can be better seen. In some places for several hundred yards we passed through groves of oil-palms, thinly interspersed with plantains, and these portions of the road were specially beautiful and characteristic.

The oil-palm *(Elais Guineensis)* is one of the handsomest and most graceful plants met with in Africa. Its stem, which is roughened by the remains of the stalks of fallen leaves, rises to a height of from fifty to sixty feet, and its summit is crowned with a beautiful plumy mass of leaves which look like immense green ostrich feathers, among which clusters of the orange-red fruit stand out in vivid contrast to the soft green foliage.

The base of the lowest whorl of leaves is commonly occupied by a colony of parasitical ferns with long, narrow, trailing fronds which droop from the head of the stem in long, lacy streamers. It seems curious to see ferns growing at such a height from the ground, and the observer is apt to wonder, as the poet did regarding the flies in the amber, "how the d—l they got there." Possibly the spores are carried to the palm tops by insects, in the same manner as pollen is transported from flower to flower; or perhaps, since the palm is an acrogen, and when young its leaves start out directly from the ground, the stem not being yet

developed, the ferns effect an entrance before the head of leaves becomes elevated. At any rate, nearly every palm has its wreath of fern leaves, and I have never seen the same species of fern growing in any other situation, and judging from its peculiar pendant habit, I should think that it was a form specially modified to suit its peculiar habitat.

The oil-palm, however, is not merely an ornamental plant. It is one of the most useful and valuable members of the African flora, for besides furnishing the greater part of their diet to the parrots, horn-bills and numerous other birds, and providing the principal ingredient for the soups, "palaver sauce" and the famous "palm-oil chop" so dear to the African *gourmet*—black or white,—it yields the oil that forms the staple commercial product of the West Coast, and that, in the form of soap and candles, ministers largely to European comfort and cleanliness.

The plantain, *(Musa paradisiaca)* like the oil-palm, has its æsthetic and its practical side. From the former point of view it is a most pleasant object in a landscape, its firm, glossy, lily-like leaves contrasting strongly with the light lacy structure of the palms; and when, becoming mature, they split transversely every inch or two until they form a fringe of ribbons hanging from the mid-rib, their appearance is very curious and characteristic. Regarded from the standpoint of utility, the plantain is deserving of the highest respect.

Apart from the fact that its fruit has been identified

by some with the apple that tempted our first parents and

"Brought death into the world and all our woe,"

(a fact that perhaps would not entitle it to any special gratitude on our part) the many purposes that it serves, and the benefits it yields both to man and the lower creation, place it in the foremost rank among the plants of the tropics. The favourite food of the horn-bills and parrots, and by no means despised by our Simian relatives in the tree-tops, it furnishes by far the greater part of the diet of the human inhabitants of the forest; being eaten raw, roasted whole on the embers, or beaten in large wooden mortars into a peculiar, tenacious pulp known as "fufu."

Near Mansu we met with several plantations of bamboo, mostly in the close vicinity of streams. One thicket not far from the village was of very large extent, covering, I should think, an area of from sixty to seventy square yards. The great towering mass of canes was visible from a considerable distance, and could be distinguished from the other vegetation not only by its great size and blue-green colour, but by the cloud-like softness of its outline and its constant movement.

The effect on passing through a bamboo thicket was very curious and impressive. From the open road and the glaring sunlight we suddenly plunged into the deepest shade, and the feeling was that of having entered a vast crypt. The canes grew in great groups which were separated by several yards from other groups; and the road, as it passed through the thicket, appeared like a

long aisle bordered by rows of immense piers of clustered columns. This quasi-architectural effect was heightened by the manner in which the canes spread out from the different groups, in gentle curves, as they rose, like the ribs in fan-tracery; for, interlacing with the canes from adjacent groups, they formed quite definite arches, and the road was thus covered in by a regular vaulted roof. I was vividly reminded of this bamboo crypt when examining the Cathedral of Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, where the clustered shafts that surround the piers pass up to form the vaulting ribs of the roof, without the interposition of any capitals, being merely gathered together at the top of the pier by an encircling fillet. The whole design might have been copied direct from the bamboo.

The surface over which we marched was formed of the same ferruginous sandstone as on the preceding day, with abundant fragments of quartz, many of them containing yellow metallic-looking laminæ, and in one place I met with a mass of fine-grained granite.

The end of this day's march brought us to the village of Mansu which is about half-way to Pra-su. Here a small three-roomed hut had been built by the Government, for the use of officers travelling up and down the road, and of this erection we immediately took possession and made ourselves comfortable for the night.

The altitude of Mansu I found (by the aneroid) to be two hundred and fifty feet above Ogúa Kuma, so that the country appeared to be rising gently as we proceeded northward

On the following morning when I emerged from the hut, I found the village and the forest that surrounds it enveloped in and hidden by a dense white mist. The air was damp, chilly and raw, and the aspect of things in general very cold and cheerless. The shivering carriers had already taken up their loads, and many of them, impatient of standing in the cold, waiting for the expedition to fall in, tried to sneak off along the road. This, of course, could not be allowed, for although at this stage of our journey there was no danger from straggling, farther on it would be most unsafe, and it was necessary to accustom them to falling in in their proper place. Consequently, the three European officers were kept pretty busy in the interval, dancing round the crowd of carriers, shouting and flourishing their sticks, like a set of drovers with a herd of unruly cattle. At length the expedition was formed up. The band struck up a lively air, the advanced guard moved off, followed by the escort, the carriers, and last of all the rear guard.

The road over which we passed continued excellent, being the remains of the strategical road made by the engineers in 1873; but the bridges that crossed the numerous streams were mostly in an advanced stage of decay, only about three out of the large number met with during the day's march remaining intact. Of the remainder, most had vanished entirely, and a few had been replaced by a single unsquared log, so that the display of agility on our part, not always unaccompanied by certain mild expletives, was most remarkable.

The change in the character of the country still continued. The forest was gradually closing in, the vegetation becoming more luxuriant, and the plants and animals more characteristic and more different from those of the coast regions. Ferns were now in great profusion and variety. In addition to the coarser forms already met with, I observed many species apparently belonging to the maiden-hair group, some of them very tiny, delicate and beautiful, growing on the shady banks by the roadside, in the clefts of rocks and in the crumbling remains of fallen trees. Many palms had been blown down by tornadoes, and the dead stumps of their stems stood up two or three feet from the ground. The exterior of these stumps was clothed in a soft garment of velvety moss, and the decayed interior, which formed a sort of humus, was filled by these lovely little ferns, whose delicate feathery fronds drooped over the mossy sides in sprays of the tenderest green.

One of the Hausas brought me a most wonderful fungus that he had found while searching for water; in shape it was like an ordinary toad-stool with a very thick stem and rather small head, but from the part at which the latter was attached to the former, hung a bell-shaped curtain of wide-meshed network. The whole plant was of the purest and most dazzling white, like the finest porcelain, and its appearance was so striking as to arouse the enthusiasm even of the natives, whose appreciation of the beauties of natural objects is not ordinarily keen. It emitted a most disagreeable and penetrating odour, in spite of which, I

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was told, it was greatly esteemed as an article of diet. But the event of the day for me was the finding of a veritable earth-worm. I had never before met with one in Africa, and had often wondered whether, as stated by Drummond, they were entirely absent from the fauna. That doubt was now resolved by the finding of the present specimen (which I carefully deposited in my collecting-box and brought home in spirit). It was about six inches long, very dark green in colour, with a peculiar lustre like the sheen of a moonstone.

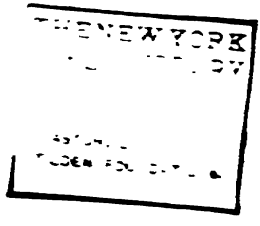
Near the end of our day's journey the road commenced to descend steeply, and continued to do so for about a mile. Soon after reaching the level we arrived at the village of Assin-Yan-Kumasi, where we halted for the night, putting up in some huts that were assigned to us by the chief. We were now in the country of Assin, which extends from the borders of Fanti near Dunkwa, to the Pra. The people are nearly related to the Fantis, from whom they are practically indistinguishable, and speak a closely similar dialect of Ochi.

There is a Yan-Kumasi in Fanti not far from Dunkwa, indeed, it is very common in this part of Africa to find several towns with the same name, which is not surprising when we consider that they are usually named after some natural object, such as a river or a tree. Thus there are several Kumasis and Odumasis, and numerous Tannosus are dotted along the course of the long river which gives them their name.

On the following day we marched about twenty-five miles, and this brought us to the end of the first stage of our journey, Pra-su. This village, which was then the northern frontier station of the British Protectorate, is situated on the southern bank of the Pra. It possessed a camp of Hausa constabulary, a stockaded fort which had been constructed by Inspector Firminger, and a Government House. The latter was a substantially built, three-roomed building with solid thick walls and a thatched roof. The three living-rooms were large, airy and comfortable, and underneath them were a magazine, armoury, store and orderly room. There had originally been two flights of steps leading up to the officers' quarters, but at the time of which I am speaking one of these had entirely vanished, and the other had fallen away from the house about a foot and was on the verge of dissolution, so that we made use of it as little as possible, and then with much caution and trepidation.

We arrived at Pra-su in the afternoon, and had our tea laid in great state in the large sitting-room. Already it seemed quite strange to us to be taking our meals in a civilized apartment, and we wandered round the room, cup and saucer in hand, inspecting curiously the traces of former occupation. There had been no European resident there for several years, but everything seemed to be just as the last occupant had left it. There were various pencilled inscriptions on the white-washed walls, and sheets of coloured illustrations from the "Graphic" were hung round the

A TRIBUTARY OF THE PRA.



room, each with the initials "R.E.F." written in the corner, with the date. On some of these pictures the white ants had constructed their tunnels of clay, and on one a wasp had built its nest: otherwise they looked as fresh as if they had been put up but yesterday, and nothing but the pencilled date served to mark the time that had elapsed since they were first hung to grace and brighten the lonely home of the brave cheery officer whose initials they bore.

In the evening I went down to the river and chartered the large, flat-bottomed, "dug-out" canoe which served as the ferry boat, and which was propelled, punt-fashion, with a long pole. The navigation was by no means easy, for the river was now almost at its lowest, extremely shallow, and the current was rather swift. The channel was a good deal obstructed by rocks, but much more so by the innumerable snags that had accumulated in the course of years; and I was at once amused and enraged by the unskilfulness of the canoe-man, who as soon as he sighted a snag ahead, bore down on it with malicious glee and charged it with a vigour that sent me floundering in the bottom of the canoe. After enduring my pilot's eccentricities for a while, I directed him to cease poling and to allow the canoe to drift with the stream while I sat in the stern and surveyed the prospect.

The Pra—or more properly the Busum-Pra—is at this part a really noble-looking river. Its quiet yellow waters sweep silently but swiftly between high, steep banks which

which are clothed in all the splendour of tropical forest vegetation. It is, however, pervaded by a certain loneliness and solitude that rather oppress the observer. No villages appear on the banks below Pra-su, no canoes disturb its tranquil surface, and nowhere is there the faintest indication of the presence of man. As I sat in the drifting canoe everything around seemed suggestive of complete aloofness from humanity. An absolute stillness brooded over the scene, and an unearthly silence, broken only at rare intervals by the unfamiliar cry of some forest bird, or by the plash of a fish as it rose and dimpled the placid surface of the water. The luxuriant bush crowding down the banks even to the water's edge: the tall, still forms of the gaunt giants of the forest that stood, sentinel-like, along the margin of the river: the graceful, plumy palms, delicate as lace and motionless as though wrought in bronze, their forms faithfully repeated in the tranquil water: the exuberant leafage, the breathless air, and the warm, cloudless evening sky: all combined to produce an effect of indescribable beauty and magnificence. But above all was the overpowering sense of solitude—almost of desolation.

The prefix "Busum"—sacred—indicates the reverence with which the Pra is regarded by the people of the district, and indeed, it is easy to understand how they, living all their lives near its banks or in the gloomy shade of the forest, should come to think of the beautiful stream as the natural abode of the *Abusum* or god of their country.

CHAPTER II

ADANSI AND BEKWE

ACROSS the Pra—Adansi—Brofo Edru—Atassi Kwanta—Houses of Adansi—A deserted village—Collapse in a Swamp—Tortuosity of Road—How produced—The Camp—Author's method of Surveying—Starvation of the Men—The Moinsi Hill—Kwissa—Fommana—Food—Out of the Wilderness—Bekwe—Concerning the Umbrella—The King of Bekwe—Royal Ceremonial—Native Musicians—Native Oratory—Aduabin—Kasi.

THE next day we determined to make a holiday, for the rapid march from Cape Coast had considerably fatigued the men, and it was most desirable that they should be in good condition for the march to Kumasi.

I accordingly resolved to avail myself of this opportunity to enjoy a ramble in the bush in search of game. With this idea in view I rose at half-past four, and taking my gun and collecting-box, crossed the Pra in the canoe and plunged into the dense forest on the north side. I soon found that shooting was out of the question as I could not see above a dozen yards in any direction, and no game appeared in that narrow radius, so I devoted my energies to a search for insects and mollusca, to the unspeakable disgust of my orderly who accompanied me, and of this "small deer" I obtained quitè a fine "bag." When I was tired of grub-

bing among the roots of trees and tearing up pieces of moss for the sake of the *Pupæ* and other minute shells which lived in them, I adjourned to the little village of Brofo Edru, where I lit a fire, and with the assistance of my orderly, Onitchi Gara, boiled some water in a clay pot (which Onitchi borrowed in the village) and made some tea, which I presently consumed together with the solid provisions from Onitchi's haversack, with great satisfaction to myself and to the audience of men, women and children who squatted in a semicircle round me.

This refection concluded I bestowed a threepenny-piece and my blessing on the village chief, (I think from his manner he would rather have had two threepenny pieces) and returned to Prasu, where I spent the remainder of the day in idleness.

At day-break next morning the bugle was heard sounding reveille in the compound of "Government House." In a short time the expedition was mustered in the compound, and marched down to the ferry in parties of a dozen. The crossing of the river took us, from start to finish, just twenty-five minutes, and when this was completed we moved off in Indian file along an obscure unfrequented track which was in those days grandiloquently described in the official papers as the "Great North Road." I stood on the bank, looking across the river at the little Residency we had just left, until the advanced guard and main body of the expedition had vanished along the road: then I turned and followed, and in a few minutes found myself

enveloped in the deep gloom of the dense forest. We had now passed out of the British Protectorate and had entered the country of Adansi, a somewhat large and important kingdom formerly tributary to Ashanti, of which it practically formed a part. Since the war of 1873 this union had been dissolved with not very happy results, for the Adansis having revolted, had kept up a more or less chronic war with their more powerful neighbours, in which they had generally been worsted. At the time of our journey the struggle had just ended, its immediate consequences being the annihilation of the Adansi Kingdom and the destruction of its towns and villages.

Our first halt was at the village of Brofo Edru, where large quantities of iron ore lay on the surface, rendering the compass quite useless in its vicinity. After marching for another hour and a half we reached the large village of Atassi Kwanta, where we halted for an early lunch.

This was the last inhabited village that we met with in Adansi. For the next five days we marched through a country where not a living soul was to be met with, all the inhabitants having been either killed, captured, or driven out by the conquering Ashantis. Atassi Kwanta was a quite typical Adansi village, and being the only inhabited one besides Brofo Edru that we met with, I may as well briefly describe it.

It was situated in a large clearing, perhaps five hundred yards in extent, hedged in on all sides by a lofty wall of forest. The path (the "Great North Road") passed through

the centre of the clearing and widened out to form the main—and only—street of the village. Along each side of this roadway was a row of houses, and at the back of these other houses dotted about irregularly, leaving narrow crooked alleys between. At about the centre of the street was the inevitable shade-tree, a fine wide-spreading *Ficus* with a huge mass of contorted roots.

The houses in Adansi are of precisely the same type as those met with in Ashanti and differ entirely from those of the villages south of the Pra. These latter, in common with all the coast villages, are in no essential respect different from the extremely rude cottages found in primitive parts of England. They have four walls pierced with holes that serve as windows and doorways, and a rough thatched roof.

In the more civilized villages, such as Dunkwa and Yan-Kumasi, various improvements have been introduced, copied from the European houses of Cape Coast and other settlements. The interiors are divided into two rooms, the doorways furnished with a wooden door, and in some cases wooden shutters added to the windows. In Adansi and Ashanti the type is quite different and peculiar to the district. The lowest member of the house is an oblong platform of clay about two feet six inches high, the top of which forms the floor: on this three walls are built, the fourth side being quite open, so that the house looks somewhat like a rather squat Punch and Judy show. The roof is of thatch, formed usually of the leaves of the oil-palm,

lashed by means of the thin flexible stems of the smaller lianas to rude rafters which are similarly fastened together. The material of the walls and platforms is a bright pinky-red clay, and this is finished very neatly, the surfaces being dressed with red ochre and smoothed until they have a dull polish. The ends of the houses and the gables when there are any (more commonly there are not, the roof being open at both ends), are ornamented by various designs in low relief, which I shall describe in detail in speaking of Kumasi, and the front of the platform is generally more or less covered with ornament on each side of the rude step that usually occupied its centre. Most of the houses stand in little compounds surrounded by fences of cane-like grass stalks or palm leaves, but the openings are not guarded by gates, and the right of way through them seems to be quite undisputed.

In every village there was a large plantation of plantains and another of papaw trees. These appeared to be common property, and their fruit together with that gathered from the oil-palms in the forest seemed to form the principal and almost the only sustenance of the inhabitants.

About an hour after leaving Atassi Kwanta we passed through the first of a long series of deserted villages, and as these all presented a similar appearance, one description will answer for all of them.

The path suddenly emerged from the gloom and shadow of the forest into the dazzling glare of an open space; open, that is to say, as far as trees were concerned, but

choked up with a mass of tangled matted herbage and a stiff coarse grass from eight to ten feet in height. Almost hidden amongst the rank vegetation were a number of shapeless masses of red clay, with here and there a portion of a wall or the charred fragments of a fallen roof. Now and again an entire house was left standing, and with its skeleton roof and gaping empty chamber was more eloquent of desolation and destruction than even the more fragmentary ruins. There was something very mournful and pathetic about these empty villages, especially where little traces of the vanished inhabitants told of the life that had been so rudely interrupted. Wooden stools, spindle-whorls and fragments of cotton cloth lay among the ruins of the houses, and in some of the overgrown compounds cooking-pots still stood on the rude clay fireplaces, above heaps of long-extinct ashes and half-burnt faggots.

But still more sad and painfully significant of the tragedy that accompanied the village's demolition, were the relics that lay hidden amongst the roots of the high grass that had overrun the compounds and obliterated the village streets. There, cleaned by the ants and bleached to porcelain whiteness by the burning sun, were numbers of human bones, the unsepulchred remains of those villagers who had been slaughtered amidst the burning ruins of their forest home.

It was weary work marching through this Adansi wilderness, for the path, so long disused, was completely overgrown and was with the greatest difficulty traced. Underfoot a

network of roots rendered walking most painful, while the interlacing branches of great lianas that blocked the way had to be hacked through with cutlasses before the loads and hammocks could be dragged through. Every few minutes a fallen tree was encountered lying across the track, and this had to be vaulted or climbed over, a sufficiently annoying feature in the march to the unencumbered members of the party, but particularly trying to the carriers with their heavy loads. The case was still worse when these fallen trees were, as was frequently the case, of large size, for many of the great silk-cottons have a diameter of twelve or fifteen feet at the base of the trunk: and when, as happened on several occasions, two or three of these giants had fallen on top of one another a most formidable obstruction was presented. In clambering over these piled-up trunks we were frequently made the subjects of one of those practical jokes which the termites play on unsuspecting travellers; for the trees, although in outward appearance perfectly sound, had been eaten out by these insects until the interior was a spongy mass of papery tinder mixed with soft earth. Hence it happened on several occasions, that when we had climbed to the top of the uppermost trunk and stood up preparatory to descending, the bark suddenly gave way and we were plunged up to our waists in the rotten remains of the wood. Another disagreeable feature of the Adansi road was formed by the swamps through whose inky evil-smelling waters we had to wade. I generally endeavoured to avoid the unpleasantness of

getting my clothes saturated with the stinking ooze, by mounting on the back of one of my men, but in this way I met with a terrible mishap in one of the deepest, blackest and most malodorous of these morasses.

I had advanced to the middle of the swamp, my bearer stepping slowly and cautiously over the treacherous mud, sending up at each step a volume of bubbles of gas that filled the air with a most disgusting stench, when suddenly both his feet slid along the slippery bottom, and the next moment I found myself lying up to my neck in the slimy ooze and my quondam bearer sitting on my stomach. When I emerged from that swamp I bore a striking resemblance to a certain boy figured in the graphic pages of "Struwelpeter," and the odour that exhaled from my person for the rest of the day was quite indescribable.

But perhaps the worst feature of this road was its exasperating tortuosity. Sometimes after a long day's march my astronomical observations would show that we had not advanced a dozen miles as the crow flies, and very often we of the rear-guard could hear, and sometimes even see, through the bush, the advance guard which was fully half an hour in advance of us.

It is not at all difficult to see how this extraordinary tortuosity has been brought about. Twice in every year, at the commencement and end of the rainy season, the forest is swept by a series of tornadoes, and at that time the lofty unstable trees may be heard falling in all directions, and of course a considerable number fall across the paths. Now,

if they are of small or moderate size and create no very serious obstruction, no notice is taken of them; but if they happen to be of such large dimensions as to seriously impede the progress of travellers carrying burdens, one of two courses is adopted. Either a fire is made on the path by the fallen tree, when the latter ignites and slowly smoulders away; or, more commonly, a detour is made round the prostrate giant, and the path resumed farther on. In the course of time the tree is destroyed by the termites, and its *débris* washed away by succeeding rains until no trace of it remains except the loop in the path that was made to avoid it. This becomes a permanent bend in the road, for curiously enough the natives never appear to think of the simple expedient of striking across the chord of the loop and resuming the straight road. In this way, in the course of years, loop after loop is added to the paths until it becomes a continuous series of serpentine curves.

It will easily be imagined that along such a road as this our progress was not very rapid, and that when, after marching from daybreak until sunset, we halted at our camping ground, we were pretty well spent, and generally not a little out of humour. Desolate as were the empty villages of Adansi with their ruined houses and unburied dead, a feeling of restful satisfaction would steal over me as I entered the one that formed our halting-place, and beheld the preparations for setting up the camp.

The first indication that I (marching at the extreme rear of the column) usually perceived of our approach to our

destination was the encounter of a group of our carriers filling our canteen buckets from a stream. A few minutes afterwards I generally emerged into the open space of the village, where gangs of carriers were engaged hacking down the long grass with their cutlasses to clear a space for the erection of the tents.

CROSSING A SHALLOW STREAM.

When the camp was fairly set up it presented a very animated and picturesque aspect. At one extremity the three tents of the European officers were pitched, and outside these the dining-table with its array of iron plates and cups; and hard by the three camp chairs occupied by their respective owners in attitudes of luxurious repose, whose eyes wandered from time to time in glances of expectant curiosity

to where the smoke of the wood fire mingled with the fragrant steam from the camp kettle. Around the tents the ammunition, stores and baggage were stacked, and from these the long line of piled arms extended down the middle of the camp, the whole being presided over by a sentry who, as he "walked his lonely round", was made the subject of many a lively sally by his more fortunate comrades. In the native quarter of the camp what remained of daylight was utilized, if the night looked at all threatening, in the erection of temporary huts, while if the night promised to be fine, as was nearly always the case at this stage of our journey, the large smooth leaves of the plantain were spread upon the ground to serve as sleeping mats. In every part of the camp columns of smoke were seen rising from the numerous fires which were made partly for warmth, partly for culinary purposes and partly to keep off the nocturnal beasts that prowled abroad after dark.

As the night closed in the scene underwent a curious change. The tall trees of the forest at first became enveloped in a thin mist and then gradually faded away in the increasing gloom. As the darkness increased the details of the camp became one by one invisible until nothing could be seen but the glowing fire, against which the figures of the men stood out in sharp silhouette.

Our followers seemed to derive the keenest enjoyment from sitting round the fire and chattering after the day's labours, and when taking my last look round before turning in I usually found them still wide awake and jabbering

vociferously as they smoked their pipes and watched the last few plantains roasting on the embers.

These quiet evenings in camp after the long wearisome marches through the forest come back to me among the most pleasant reminiscences of the journey.

After dinner and the post-prandial smoke and gossip (the post-prandial glass was tabooed on the march, and water was practically our only drink, a fact to which I think the good health we enjoyed is largely attributable) I usually retired to my tent, where a lamp had been lit and things made comfortable for the night. Very few people, I believe, who have not lived under canvas for a lengthened period, have any idea how cosy and luxurious an abode a tent can be made, if the occupant is willing to accept it in its native simplicity and refrain from encumbering it with unnecessary furniture and equipments. Mine was an ordinary regulation bell-tent with a double roof, and was furnished with the excellent camp kit made by Messrs. Pigott, the whole of which stows away in a canvas bag which can be carried by one man. When set up and furnished, my tent had a most inviting and home-like aspect and was as commodious a residence as a traveller could wish for. Occupying one side was the little folding bedstead with its mosquito net suspended from the tent pole. On the other side a writing-table was rigged up by standing two baggage cases on end and laying my drawing-board across them. The wash-stand, and a dressing-table consisting of another baggage case, were placed outside the tent. A

small folding chair stood by the writing-table, and the luxurious deck-chair was placed just within the doorway. I disposed of the evenings in writing up my journal, in looking over and taking notes of my specimens, and in plotting my survey of the day's route. On clear nights my altazimuth was brought forth and I took one or two observations to fix the latitude of the camp, and these business details being settled, the rest of the evening was spent sitting at the door of my tent in the enjoyment of a soothing pipe and the perusal of the oft-read pages of one of the few volumes that I carried in my trunk.

The morning was usually a period of tribulation.

At about half-past five the bugler took up his stand in front of my tent, and I firmly believe turned the muzzle of his infernal instrument into my doorway as he blew a blast that abruptly put an end to my dreamless slumber: upon which I turned out shivering and wretched into the darkness of the chilly cheerless morning, performed my ablutions outside the tent—which was meanwhile being taken down—and drew on my cold damp clothing. Next came breakfast, which was tastefully laid out on the top of a box and was consumed hurriedly by the light of a lantern, and then the "fall in" was sounded and the expedition slowly filed out of the village clearing just as the first glimmer of dawn was appearing in the sky. Then commenced the labours of the day, which in my case were not light, for during the whole of the march I walked compass in hand, keeping a dead reckoning of our direction. The method of survey-

ing which I adopted on this journey, and by which the route on the map accompanying this volume was laid down, was as follows. On starting out of camp in the morning, I observed and noted down the time. I then walked for fifteen minutes, holding the compass in my hand and mentally averaging the direction indicated by it. At the end of the fifteen minutes I halted and noted in my road book the average direction and the time: and so on throughout the day, noting the average direction every fifteen minutes.

If any stream was encountered the time at which it was reached, its width, the direction and rapidity of its current and the nature of its bottom were duly noted; and if any obstruction, such as a fallen tree, arrested the progress of the column, the time taken up in passing it had also to be entered so as to avoid error in plotting the route. The method was most laborious when the marches were long—and we often marched from day-break to sunset—and may seem somewhat inaccurate, but it was the only one that was possible, for any kind of triangulation was quite out of the question by reason of the thickness of the vegetation, and even back and fore sights were impossible in such dense wood and on such a tortuous road. But the results were much more accurate than would have been expected, for the route survey was constantly checked by astronomical observations, and by this means the principal error, that of distance, was completely eliminated.

There was one advantage about this forest route: no irksome precautions were necessary to avoid the effects of

the sun. No unwieldy helmet was needed to protect the head, nor any stiff white garments to guard the body; and the mild equable temperature from 75° to 85° rendered equally unnecessary any precaution against chills. My own dress in the forest consisted of a flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled up above the elbows, kharki trousers and high field-boots; and my head covering, when I wore any, was a battered wide felt hat which, besides its effect in completing a costume that would have ensured my admission into any casual ward, was very useful to sit upon when the ground was damp.

The first hour's march through the dark chilly forest was very comfortless and dismal. The air was raw and damp and everything around was reeking with moisture. The high herbage through which we waded was saturated with dew, so that in a few minutes we were soaked to the skin, from the armpits downward. The water dripped incessantly from the foliage overhead, and the trunks of the trees, the branches of the bushes, and the interlacing lianas were all shiny with the wet.

As the sun rose, however, and occasional streaks of light pierced the far-away canopy of leafage, things began to assume a more cheerful aspect. The cold damp of the air gave place to a steamy warmth, and the sombre darkness of the early morning merged into the soft twilight of day. About 11 o'clock we halted, usually by the side of some convenient stream, for lunch, or, as it is called in West Africa, breakfast.

How grateful to our ears, after four or five hours' laborious scrambling along those rough forest paths, was the soft voice of the distant bugle calling back the advance guard! When I heard it I almost forgave the bugler his morning atrocities—as visions of the coming feast arose before me.

Sometimes the bugle was inaudible to us of the rear guard by reason of its distance ahead, but the faithful Joseph, who marched with the carriers, always detected the welcome sound, and came shambling up to me—usually convulsed with unexplained hilarity—to announce that "beegle say halt." Our lunch was a very simple affair, but extremely comforting withal. One of the carriers packs was "dumped" down on the path, and a table-napkin spread on it. Three iron plates, a like number of knives and a tin of rank Norwegian butter were produced from the "chop-box" [1] together with such dainties as our circumstances permitted. In Adansi our usual ration was a tin of corned beef and a loaf of bread, but in more prosperous districts the chop-box afforded such luxuries as hard-boiled eggs and sometimes even a boiled fowl.

But if it was weary work for us Europeans trudging through this dismal wilderness of Adansi it was infinitely worse for our men, especially for the carriers whose heavy loads made the rough track far more fatiguing than it seemed to the unencumbered members of the expedition.

[1] In West Africa the word "chop" is universally used to replace "food," and is moreover used in the form of a verb—to chop = to eat.

And in addition to the difficulties arising from the bad state of the road, difficulties that we had in a great measure foreseen and expected, we were confronted by a still greater difficulty which was quite unexpected.

There was no food to be obtained.

At Atassi-Kwanta our men had fortunately taken a supply of plantains that lasted them for that day, but after leaving the latter village not a sign of food was seen anywhere. In the deserted villages there were large plantations of plantains and papaws, but the fruit from these had been consumed by other travellers, probably Ashantis, and now not a plantain or papaw remained.

When the evening of the second day arrived and still no supplies could be obtained, things began to look serious, and although no grumbling was heard and the men kept in excellent spirits, we began to feel decidedly anxious.

About one o'clock on the following day (16th December) we arrived at the foot of the Moinsi Hill. The southern face which we had to ascend was extremely precipitous, and we scrambled up it with considerable difficulty, although the dense wood that clothed it afforded us some assistance; but notwithstanding its steepness the carriers climbed up in the most gallant style, and to the best of my recollection there was not a single casualty with the loads.

The adroitness with which these Africans balance their burthens upon their heads is perfectly astonishing. During the whole of our long march I cannot recall a single instance of a man letting his load fall; when once the pack

had been fairly settled on the head it seemed as secure as if fastened with a screw; and I have seen women carrying calabashes full of water on their heads, stoop down by the rivers and wash their faces without spilling a single drop.

From the summit of the Moinsi Hill the road descended gently to the village of Kwissa, and from this place we journeyed on to the deserted town of Fómmana, where we camped for the night.

Fómmana was a somewhat considerable town formerly, in fact it was the capital of Adansi, and it was here that the treaty of peace was signed by the Ashantis in 1874. We had entertained some hopes of finding at least some part of it inhabited and of being able to get some refreshment for our men, and we were greatly disappointed to find it as desolate and ruinous as the rest of Adansi and as destitute of food. This question of supplies now began to assume an exceedingly grave aspect. For two whole days our men had been entirely without food and had meanwhile been marching long distances at a rapid pace and carrying heavy burthens. They were still quite cheerful and took the matter philosophically, but they began to look very fagged and out of condition.

On the following morning we got on the road at daybreak and marched on steadily and rapidly for five hours. The men were very silent and "down on their luck," but still they uttered no complaints. They did not wish any halts to be made, but were anxious to push on as fast as possible, and in their views we fully concurred; for it was evident

that if we did not obtain some food for them before long the expedition would collapse altogether.

About midday a sudden commotion was heard among the men forming the main body, and this quickly spread to the rear guard: and before I had time to enquire what the excitement was about the carriers had flung down their loads and the Hausas their rifles and all scampered off to the front, tumbling over one another, and yelling like Bedlamites. Not a little astonished at this unaccountable conduct on the part of our followers, I followed the retreating natives—passing lines of abandoned loads—and presently emerged into the open clearing of a deserted village.

Here the cause of the excitement was at once apparent. At the end of the clearing was a large plantation of plantains, and as I entered I noticed that the plants were swaying as though a tornado were blowing, while at short intervals parties of our carriers emerged from the plantation carrying large bunches of the fruit, which they proceeded to devour in their raw state.

The appearance of these plantains was most opportune, and a great weight was taken off the minds of the European officers as they looked round at the groups of Hausas and carriers seated contentedly on the ground, munching the fruit and chattering with their mouths very full; and it was decided that under the very exceptional circumstances it would be wise to take no notice of the serious breach of discipline that had occurred. For it appeared that no

sooner did the advance guard come in view of these providential food supplies than they fell out as one man and made a rush for the plantains; the main escort in a like manner, as they emerged into the open, put down their rifles and followed the lead of the advance guard; and the carriers, the band, and the rear guard, all followed suit; in fact as soon as the plantains hove in sight the expedition dissolved and its members abandoned themselves to the unwonted enjoyment of a thorough "blow out."

As it was quite obvious that the men would be incapable of marching after this meal, we decided to halt for the day at this village, the name of which we found was Obúm; and I gave orders for fires to be lighted forthwith so that the men might cook the remaining plantains and thus minimise the risk of a general outbreak of dyspepsia. Very soon fires were going in every part of the camp, and on each, rows of plantains were seen roasting. These cooking operations, followed by the immediate consumption of the products, continued for the rest of the day, and the figures of the men exhibited a gradually increasing rotundity.

But they appeared none the worse for their enormous meal, and were up on the following morning in excellent spirits, and got under way about a quarter past six.

As we proceeded we felt more and more thankful that the men had been enabled to get this refreshment, for this particular march was one of the most difficult and laborious that we experienced on the whole journey. The number of stoppages and obstructions rendered it most worrying and

disheartening. Every few minutes the column was brought to a standstill by some obstacle, and this was peculiarly exasperating to those who were in the rear of the expedition, as they had to halt while those in advance, one by one, surmounted it. Now an impenetrable network of gigantic creepers completely closed the track and had to be hacked down by the cutlasses of a gang of pioneers: now two or three immense trees had fallen one upon another, and the loads had to be passed over one at a time before the men could climb over. There were several swamps which had to be waded through with great care by the heavily burdened carriers, and the number of streams that had to be forded was perfectly incredible.

About mid-day the forest began to open out a little, but the road did not by any means improve. At last, about half-past two, we emerged into the town of Bekwe, the capital of a kingdom of the same name, and we rejoiced to think that we had bid farewell to the dreary wilderness of Adansi.

We were once more in an inhabited country, and when a crowd of the Bekwes gathered round to watch the erection of the tents and to witness the ludicrous spectacle of the white men taking their food, we felt that the circle of gaping spectators imparted a cheerfulness and a human interest to the scene that had been quite wanting in the desolate villages that we had left behind.

As we were sitting at our table under the shade-tree

a messenger approached and informed us that the king was about to pay us a visit, and very shortly after this announcement our ears were saluted by a sound like the braying of an ass mingled with the beating of drums.

This sound we discovered was produced by the royal musicians, and looking in the direction from which it proceeded we perceived the procession approaching at a slow walk. The crowd of chiefs and officials forming the *cortége* had a very brilliant appearance, each man having donned his best apparel in honour of the white men; and the magnificence of the procession was increased by a number of the large velvet-covered umbrellas which form so characteristic a feature in native ceremonials. I do not know why it is so, but evidently to the African mind an umbrella is a special symbol of magnificence and dignity. Not only in these interior countries, where the umbrellas are of local manufacture and of really gorgeous appearance, being covered with velvet of various and brilliant colours, hung with gold fringe and studded with gold ornaments, but on the coast and even in so comparatively civilized a place as Sierra Leone, the umbrella is the outward and visible sign of the dignity and importance of its possessor. In the latter town on any Sunday morning, native aristocrats, who on week-days loaf about the streets and markets bareheaded, may be seen wending their way to church, their woolly pates surmounted by a shiny "topper" and duly protected by a trade gingham; and at Elmina, chief Ando on state occasions was accompanied by an attendant

carrying a full-sized umbrella-tent! The glory and social prestige imparted by an umbrella varies with its size, a fact which will appear very plainly when I come to speak of our reception at Kumasi, and the Royal umbrella usually exceeds all others in magnitude.

This was the case in the present instance, the king of Bekwe's umbrella being plainly distinguishable from those of the chiefs, by its superior size.

As the procession moved along, the umbrellas were continually raised and lowered, possibly with the idea of making them act as fans, or more probably to increase the grandeur of their appearance; but as a matter of fact, the effect of some dozen huge umbrellas bobbing up and down was comical in the extreme.

The king was a young man of rather good appearance, with a vivacious and intelligent manner. His dress was of the most gorgeous kind and was quite free from the absurd admixture of European with native apparel which is so often seen in native potentates in the coast districts, who, arraying themselves in cocked hats and second-hand guardsmen's coats, utterly destroy the dignity of their appearance and convert themselves into mere Merry-Andrews. The King of Bekwe wore only the traditional clothing and ornaments of an African king, and I am not sure that these are not more handsome and in better taste than many English state dresses. His body was enveloped in a purple silk "ntama" or body-cloth, worn in the graceful native fashion, like the Roman toga; and his sleek brown

skin set off to great advantage the numerous gold ornaments that hung around his neck, wrists and ankles. Some of these, I observed, were of very fine workmanship, especially a daintily executed model of an Ashanti stool which was suspended by a short chain from his wrist. His head was encircled by a narrow green silken fillet, and numbers of gold ornaments were stuck in his hair. He was supported (literally) by two chiefs, one on either side, in much the same manner as indiscreet wassailers at home are supported by policemen during their progress to the lock-up; and when he extended his hand for us to shake, it was presented by the chief who supported it, as though it was paralyzed. This curious fashion prevails throughout Ashanti. On ceremonial occasions it appears to be the correct thing for men of position to adopt an entirely passive attitude, all movements being executed for them by their attendants. When I was about to rise from my chair to salute the King of Bekwe several of his chiefs rushed forward to assist me, and when I endeavoured to resume my seat I was seized by the same courteous officials and gently lowered into it.

I have read somewhere that native grandees in this part of Africa are accustomed to wear such enormous and ponderous bracelets of gold that their arms have to be supported by slaves. I have never been able to confirm this statement by my own observation, but I think it possible that the custom that I have described may have given rise to this report; or, still more probably, the wearing of heavy gold ornaments may be an obsolete fashion which

became extinct when the advent of the white men raised the value of gold and led to its exportation in large quantities, in which case the present custom would be a survival, like the judge's nosegay at the Old Bailey.

As the procession moved towards our camp it was preceded by a band of musicians beating drums and blowing horns. The former were conical instruments of cotton wood with goatskin drum-heads, and the latter consisted of large elephant-tusks with holes bored close to the points. When blown singly they emitted a sound very much like that of a mail steamer's whistle, but when several were played together so as to produce chords the effect was somewhat like the sound of a coarse-toned organ.

When the procession arrived at the place where we were sitting the musicians took up their position in front of us and struck a few simple prolonged chords on one or two notes, without attempting to produce any definite tune; and indeed as each trumpet was capable of giving out only one fundamental note, such an achievement would have been impossible. The drummers, who struck their instruments with sticks bent at an acute angle, executed short solos from time to time, each of which, I was informed, had some special significance as indicated by the number and rhythm of the notes.

As soon as the king had advanced to us and shaken our hands his stool-bearer set down his stool, upon which he forthwith seated himself; and the chiefs who accompanied him, having had their stools set down for them, took their seat in a like manner.

This is another custom that strikes the stranger rather oddly, although it is obviously well suited to the simple habits of the people. When a chief or better-class native visits another he is invariably accompanied by his stool-bearer, who carries the stool or chair upon which his master is accustomed to sit. For even the best and most elaborate of West African households are quite simple in their arrangements and do not include a supply of furniture sufficient for the accommodation of visitors. Hence the stool-bearer is a regular constituent of all kinds of native processions.

The stools of the king and chiefs having thus been placed in a semicircle in front of us, their owners took their seats, and the numerous attendants seated themselves on the ground, with the exception of those whose duties required them to stand, such as the umbrella-bearers and the sword-bearers; then the palaver began. The matter of this need not be here described in detail. It related principally to the importance of keeping the trade roads open and maintaining peaceful relations with surrounding tribes; and the various points having been set forth by our "linguist" or interpreter, Odonkor, (each proposition being assented to by the attentive and intelligent-looking king, with an emphatic "eyoh") His Majesty replied through his linguist, and the palaver ended.

This system of communicating through "linguists" or interpreters deserves a passing notice. In our case it was, of course, a necessity as we did not understand the language,

but the practice is universal in all ceremonious palavers even between peoples of the same nationalities. Every native king or important chief has his linguist or mouthpiece, and this official is commonly a hunchback. On enquiring the reason for this curious choice, I was told that the hunchbacks are chosen for this office because their voices are usually of exceptional sweetness; and certainly I noticed that the voices of these deformed persons were easily distinguishable from those of the other natives by a clear, high-pitched ringing quality apparently very grateful to the African ear, and which rendered their utterances unusually distinct. Through the medium of these spokesmen all the ceremonial conversation is carried on at native palavers even though the kings or chiefs should speak the same language; and these professional spokesmen are commonly great adepts in the art of rhetoric and exhibit a fluency of speech and a wealth of gesticulation perfectly astonishing.

The art of oratory is in West Africa carried to a remarkable pitch of perfection. At the public palavers each linguist stands up in turn and pours forth a flood of speech, the readiness and exuberance of which strikes the stranger with amazement, and accompanies his words with gestures so various, graceful and appropriate that it is a pleasure to look on, though the matter of the oration cannot be understood. These oratorical displays appear to afford great enjoyment to the audience, for every African native is a born orator and a connoisseur of oratory, a fact that

becomes very manifest in the Courts of Justice in the Protectorate, where the witnesses often address the juries in the most able and unembarrassed manner; I have even seen little boys of eight or ten hold forth to the court with complete self-possession and with an ease of diction and a grace of gesture that would have struck envy into the heart of an English member of Parliament.

The following day we spent resting at Bekwe, although another palaver was held in the afternoon; and on the day following this (20th December) we struck the tents at 6 a.m. and marched on to Aduabin, which we reached about mid-day, and halted, intending to remain there and await the permission of the King of Ashanti to enter his capital.

Aduabin had apparently formerly been a place of some importance, but at this time it was entirely in ruins and practically deserted, presenting much the appearance of the wretched Adansi towns. One object attracted our attention and interested us considerably. This was the ruin of the hut that had been inhabited by Lonsdale when he visited the country some years previously. It was easily distinguishable from the other houses by the fact that the only remaining wall was pierced by a hole that had served as a window.

On consideration we decided to proceed to Kasi and to wait there for the King's messengers instead of at Aduabin. So at 6.30 on the morrow we marched out of Aduabin, and after five hours' tramp through the forest we arrived at the former place, a small town within a few miles of Kumasi.

In the afternoon I received a visit from the King of Kasi, who was quite a young man, in fact little more than a youth. I had a long conversation with him, and was very much impressed with his frank and simple dignity as well as with his strikingly pleasing features and expression. I observed, too, that his people, even the elders, treated him

LONSDALE'S HUT AT ADUABIN.

with great respect and deference, a thing that is by no means universal in the case of African monarchs. The remainder of the day was spent by us (officers) in lolling about the camp, pipe in mouth, discussing the "political situation", and by the Hausas in polishing up their accoutrements in order that they might make as imposing an appearance as possible when the expedition entered Kumasi.

In the evening we held a council, which was attended by

Odonkor and Futa, with a view to determining the order of events on the morrow, should the King grant us permission to enter the city. Futa was a great authority in the country, having been in Kumasi on a previous occasion, and he explained his views at great length and with as much display of rhetoric as his croaking husky voice would permit; and after this we dined, and turned in early so as to be ready to start at daybreak if necessary.

CHAPTER III

THE DENSE FOREST

ITS Extent—General Character and Arrangement of Vegetation—The Lower Undergrowth—The Upper Undergrowth or Bush—Forest Trees—Bombax—Habit of Growth—Character of the Roots—Root Buttresses—Circumstances tending to produce them—Relation of Earthworms to Root Buttresses—Relation of Root Buttresses to Rainfall and Surface Soil—Effect of heavy Rainfall on Surface Soil—Extreme vertical elongation of Trees—Vines or Monkey Ropes—Their Usefulness to Man—Prevalence of Thorns in Forest Vegetation—Climbing Palm—Extent of Forest determined by nature of Rocks—General Appearance of the Dense Forest.

FROM the time when we crossed the Pra until a day or two before our arrival at Bontúku our route lay entirely through primeval forest. For more than a month we plodded on through the gloomy but grand and beautiful wilderness without ever getting a glimpse of open country. Almost complete strangers to the blue sky and the bright tropic sunlight, our most extensive views were those afforded by the village clearings, or the limited openings that were encountered when we crossed the larger rivers. And as a primeval forest exercises a peculiar fascination over most people's minds, and as this dense umbrageous wood is especially characteristic of this portion of the continent, it

will be well at this stage of our journey to pause to consider the appearance, nature and extent of the dense forest of the Gold Coast region.

To take the last item first. Until the geography of the interior of Upper Guinea has been more completely worked out it will not be possible to state in exact terms the superficial extent of the forest, but I should say that it probably extends continuously from the river Volta to Sierra Leone. A considerable amount of true forest exists to the east of the Volta, but there it is not continuous, and the kind of country which I describe as open, wooded or orchard-like country, such as exists in Jáman, reaches to the sea-board. The approximate extent and position of continuous primeval forest in the Gold Coast Hinterland is shown on the map which accompanies this volume.

Let us now consider the general character and arrangement of the vegetation in the dense forest.

The vegetation appeared to me to form three definite strata, each distinguished by certain botanical characters and by a certain degree of altitude. First of all was the immediate covering of the surface, the herbage or lower undergrowth which consisted of herbaceous plants and ferns. Among the former were a few plants which attracted one's attention by their blossoms, and especially a very beautiful and fragrant white lily, but in general the thing that impressed one, with some surprise and disappointment, was the remarkable scarcity of flowers. Quite rarely was a flower of any kind met with, and the few that were

encountered were for the most part inconspicuous both in size and colour, and deficient in odour. The ferns, on the other hand, were a constant source of pleasure: they were in great profusion, and the varieties were endless, from the curious climbing forms that twined round the boles of the trees up to a height of from 30 to 40 feet, to the dainty little maidenhair-like plants only two or three inches high. The ferns seemed to be quite at home in the dim light and moist air of the forest. They grew in clusters all over the surface of the ground; they took possession of the spongy remains of fallen trees; they hid themselves in the dark corners between the huge buttressed roots of the great Silk-cottons; they crouched in the crannies of rocks, and drooped with indescribable grace down the shelving banks of the quiet forest streams, dipping their delicate fronds in the slowly moving water.

The second stratum of vegetation consists of what we called the "bush," or the upper layer of the undergrowth. It rises a height of from 30 to 60 feet and consists of bushy plants and small trees, Mimosas and members of the natural orders Rosacae and Anonacae, and palms of various kinds. The bushes and trees forming this stratum reach a much greater height here in the forest than they would in the open, for their growth is almost entirely vertical; and this may also be said of the herbage of the lower undergrowth, which in the same manner and from the same causes is drawn up to an abnormal height and slenderness.

The third or upper stratum of vegetation is formed by

the great forest trees, and it is these that give the character to the forest and modify the other vegetation. A considerable proportion of these great trees belong to the silk-cotton order, and among them the Bombax is at once the commonest, the handsomest and the most typical. It is the Bombax, in fact, that produces the forest, and I would define the latter as the region of the Silk Cotton in contradistinction to the open-wooded country covered with small trees to which the name of the forest has been somewhat misleadingly applied by some other writers. [1]

When a traveller from Europe first encounters a full grown Bombax he is immediately impressed with the fact that it is entirely different in character from the trees that are found in our parks and woodlands at home. The first thing that strikes him is its enormous size. In the forest the Bombax reaches a height of over 200 feet, and at its thickest part the trunk has a diameter of nine or ten feet. I say advisedly "in the forest", for when the Bombax occurs in open country it does not attain to nearly these dimensions, although it is always a very large tree.

But apart from its gigantic size, the Bombax is distinguished from the European timber trees by certain very marked peculiarities of form and habit of growth.

In our native trees, such as the oak and chestnut, the trunk divides at a comparatively short distance from the ground into a number of main branches, and by these the height of the tree is mainly produced. In many cases one

[1] Drummond, *Tropical Africa.*

division maintains a supremacy over the rest, and this is then regarded as the upward continuation of the stem, but it very rarely happens that any great proportion of the total height of the tree is formed by the undivided trunk.

Now in the Bombax and its allies, as found in the dense forest, the habit of growth is quite different. In them the trunk rises vertically, a regular, smooth, gradually tapering cylinder, for fully three-fourths of the total height of the tree, and throughout this extent not a single branch appears to break its column-like uniformity: then near the summit it breaks up into a multitude of branches, the great majority of which have an almost entirely horizontal direction.

Another rather curious feature in these trees is their completely vertical direction. In our familiar timber trees the line of growth is seldom directly upward; there is generally a tendency to lean this way or that, and very commonly the main divisions of the trees follow a curved direction. In the Bombax, on the other hand, the trunk appears as though set up with a plumb-line. It is as truly vertical as the shaft of the monument on Fish Street Hill, and its outline is almost as smooth and regular.

The resemblance to a stone column which is thus imparted by the slenderness and regularity of the trunk is increased by the character of the bark. In the Bombax this is smooth and grey somewhat like that of the beech, and the barks of most of the other trees are similar in appearance; fissured barks like those of the oak and elm being rare, and when they exist their roughness is masked by the

coating of white silvery lichen that covers them and gives them the appearance of having been coated with whitewash.

But the character that more than any other arrests the attention and excites the curiosity of the traveller is the

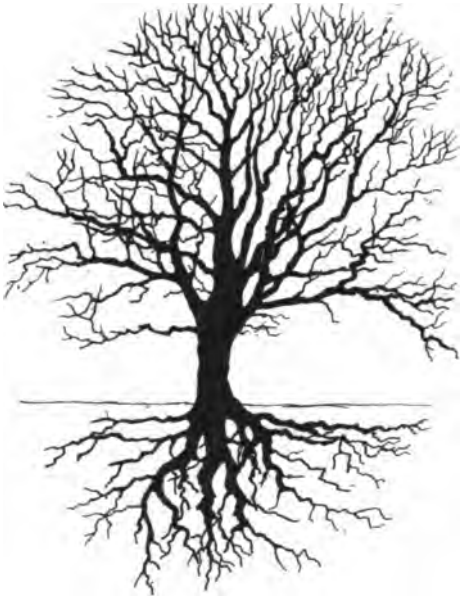


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DISPOSITION OF THE BRANCHES AND ROOTS IN AN OAK-TREE.

extraordinary structure and arrangement of the roots; and in this the tropical forest tree reaches its greatest divergence from the type that is familiar to us at home. In most of our own trees the roots are completely buried, and the trunk appears to be implanted in the earth; and in the few exceptions, such as the beech and hornbeam, a quite insignificant proportion of the root system appears above

the surface. In the Bombax, on the other hand, the greater part of the root system is above ground, and the main roots are very curiously modified in form to fit them for the discharge of a function which this condition necessitates. At their junction with the trunk they form immense flat buttress-like masses of a triangular form, that extend up to the trunk for a distance of from 10 to 15 or even 20 feet. A circle of these buttresses surrounds each tree, and between them are spaces in which it would be possible in some instances to pitch a tent. As they radiate from the butt of the tree, curving in some cases like the hanging folds of some colossal drapery, they rapidly diminish in height, and terminate in the root-trunks that spread out in all directions, twisting and coiling over the surface of the ground, like the arms of a gigantic octopus. It will thus be seen that the Bombax is not, properly speaking, implanted in the earth, but rather stands upon its surface; its stability being derived less from the portions of the roots that are buried than from the radiating root-trunks that spread out above ground, and the buttresses that surround the base of the trunk and serve to prop it up.

When I first observed these singular root-characters in the great forest trees I naturally began to speculate upon the causes that had given rise to them. The purpose that they served was obvious. Their function was clearly to give support to and increase the stability of the lofty, top-heavy trees. But this function could have been as well performed by a system of buried roots, and it was not easy

to see why these exceptional conditions existed in the forest.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DISPOSITION OF THE BRANCHES AND ROOTS IN A SILK-COTTON TREE.

At first I was disposed to regard the root-buttresses and unburied roots of the silk-cotton tribe as characters proper

to the genus and not specially related to the peculiar environment; but then I observed similar peculiarities in other trees not botanically related; and in one species that I met with on several occasions, the base of the trunk was surrounded by a circular arcade of genuine flying buttresses, the main roots springing from the bole some distance from the ground and describing considerable curves before reaching the surface.

It thus appeared probable that these peculiar characters of the roots of the Bombax were in some way related to the environment of the trees, and the question arose, "What was the nature of the relation?" Now one of the conditions that impressed and somewhat surprised me was the extreme rarity of earthworms in the forest. With such a profusion of vegetation one would have expected them to be rather numerous, but in point of fact only one or two were met with in the whole of the journey through the forest. Of the few that I found some were certainly of notable size, for one specimen of a deep red colour that I encountered in Adansi and roughly measured on my walking stick, was 2 feet 6 inches long and nearly as thick as my thumb; but in general both the worms and their casts were conspicuously absent. The observation of this curious fact led me to suspect that it might have some connection with the peculiar habit and structure of the roots of the trees, and this suspicion deepened when, on reaching the open-wooded country to the north of the forest where earthworms were plentiful and their casts conspicuous in every direction, I observed

that the roots of the trees were completely buried, and that in the few silk-cottons that were met with, in addition to

PORTION OF THE ROOTS OF A SILK-COTTON TREE, SHOWING THE ROOT-BUTTRESSES.

this disappearance of the roots below the surface, there was a very marked diminution in the size of the root-buttresses.

That there might well be some such connection will be plainly seen when it is considered how great is the influence exerted upon the nature and configuration of the surface by the activity of earthworms. Without considering the various ways in which the earth's surface becomes modified through the agency of these humble creatures, whose habits have been so patiently studied and minutely described by Darwin, a consideration of a single fact in their marvellous economy must prove how great an influence they exert upon the conformation of the roots of trees.

It is well known (and I apologise for referring to so familiar a fact) that on the surface of a tract of land which is inhabited by earthworms, there appear, especially after rain, numbers of small convoluted cylinders of earthy matter known as worm-casts, which consist of portions of the subsoil that have been swallowed by the worms and by them cast up at the mouths of their burrows. If such a piece of land be left undisturbed the casts accumulate, and presently form an even layer of soft fine soil which gradually but steadily increases in thickness and tends to bury any inert bodies that may be resting upon the surface. This is well seen in old graveyards, where the gradual disappearance of ancient headstones and monuments below the present surface, testifies to the degradation of the surface upon which they were originally reared.

This process of interchange by which the surface is continually being lowered and covered up by particles of earth

from the deeper layers of the soil, would not, however, by itself produce any permanent alteration either in the total bulk or composition of the soil. It would merely affect the arrangement of its parts, causing any rocky masses, stones or other solid bodies to gradually sink towards the subsoil, while the surface would come to be occupied by an even layer of earth in a state of minutely fine subdivision.

But as each winter approaches, in Europe, the ground becomes strewn with dead leaves, twigs, masts and other dead vegetable matter, and by the following summer these bodies have been mingled with, and by-and-by become covered by, a thin stratum of earth by the worms. A portion of this buried matter is consumed by the worms themselves, but a large proportion of it remains as a permanent constituent of the soil; and thus the thickness of the latter becomes gradually increased and its composition altered. In the course of years the surface of the earth becomes covered with a stratum of humus or organic mould which will vary in character with the quantity of vegetable matter annually cast upon its surface and with the nature of the subjacent rocks. Such a mould, although solid and coherent, will yet be light, readily permeated by moisture and easily penetrated by the most delicate rootlets, and will yield soluble nutriment which will be dissolved by the water that percolates through it. In such a soil plants will naturally develop a tendency to extend their roots vertically downwards towards the deeper layers where the moisture is more constant and the temperature more uniform; and such is

the habit that prevails in most of our British trees, the roots of which are for the most part quite deeply situated. But apart from any such habit on the part of the trees themselves, their roots would tend to become submerged below the surface, like any other stationary bodies; for roots which were originally at or near the surface would become by the agency of the worms gradually lowered into the subsoil; and although such sunken roots might be in living trees replaced by new roots thrown out near to the surface, it is obvious that trees like those I have described as inhabiting the forest, which instead of being imbedded in the ground, stand upon the surface on their outspread roots, as a tall candlestick stands upon its foot, could not maintain their peculiar habit in a region in which worms were numerous. They might indeed produce new surface roots as the old ones became buried, but in the course of time the great part of the root system would be underground. This is not the case in the forest trees of Guinea, for I have repeatedly examined large trees that have been blown down and have always found the undersurface to be almost completely flat and destitute of downward prolongation.

But it is obvious that there is here furnished no final explanation of the problem; for, admitting that the almost complete absence of earthworms would account for the conditions described, the question remains, "To what is the absence of the worms due?"—and in attempting to furnish an answer to this question a condition is brought into view

which not only accounts for the scarcity of worms, but also disposes of the root-problem without regarding the worms as a factor at all, and the two conditions instead of being related as cause and effect, appear as joint results of a common cause. In the open country to the north the surface is covered by a soft friable loamy soil apparently of considerable depth. In the forest there is hardly any soil at all, the surface being covered by a coarse gravelly mass of fragments of quartz and sandstone. The surface of the rock is in fact exposed in a state of partial disintegration.

This great difference in the nature of the surface does not appear to be directly attributable to geological causes. The whole area is covered with two alternating strata of sandstone with occasional outcrops of granite; of these sandstones one is red in colour and highly ferruginous, the other yellowish grey and apparently contains no iron. In the forest the red stone greatly predominates, while in the open country the yellow stone is much the more frequent. But the contrast in the character of the surface does not appear to be due entirely to this difference in geological formation, for where the yellow stone is found in the forest the surface is still, as a rule, rocky and coarse; while where the red stone crops out in the northern region, it is generally broken down into a soft loamy soil.

The real cause is, I think, to be found in the difference in the climate of the two regions.

In comparing my route survey of the forest with that of the open country a remarkable contrast is presented.

In the former the line of march is continually intersected by rivers and streams of various sizes, which in some parts are so numerous that several cross the track in the space of a mile. In the open country, on the other hand, rivers are quite scarce, and often an entire day passed without a single stream being forded.

Now the principal factor that determines the number of rivers in a given region is clearly the quantity of water that falls on the surface, *i.e.*, the rainfall; and the unavoidable inference from the excessive number of rivers and streams in the forest compared with the open country is that the rainfall in the former is very much greater than in the latter. This conclusion is entirely in agreement with well-established facts as well as with local experience. It is well known that the atmosphere of thickly wooded regions is much more humid than that of open land, and that the destruction of extensive forests generally produces a great decrease in the rainfall, facts which receive illustrations in the local conditions. For at Axim, which is the only station of the Gold Coast that is surrounded by forest, the climate is much more humid than elsewhere on the coast, scarcely a day passing throughout the year without some rain; while at Accra which is surrounded by an almost treeless country covered with low bushes and Euphorbias, the rainfall is so small that in some seasons great distress is occasioned by the want of water.

Let us now consider what effect an exceptionally large rainfall tends to produce upon the surface soil. And that

we may form a correct opinion upon this point, we must remember that the rain of tropical Africa is a very different thing from the rain to which we are accustomed in England. The most boisterous rain-storm in this country is quite a mild affair compared to the deluge that descends upon the earth when the tornadoes usher in the rainy season in Equatorial Africa. Not only by reason of the large quantity of water that is suddenly cast upon the land, but also by reason of the force with which it descends, the soil on the surface is converted into mud, and the surface of every slope scooped out into grooves and gullies. After a few minutes' rain every path becomes a stream, and the made roads of the settlements are cut up and in many cases totally destroyed by the rushing water.

In the forest the effect is naturally much greater than in the open country, for the downpour is even heavier and its duration much longer. Here the torrents of rain falling with great force soon convert what soil there is into diffluent mud, and this is rapidly washed into the innumerable streams which ramify throughout the region in a close network.

By this process, continued with few intermissions throughout six months in the year, the surface becomes completely denuded of the finer earth, and nothing but the coarse gravelly fragments remain to cover the face of the rock.

The direction of the roots of trees growing upon such a surface is of necessity horizontal; they are compelled to spread out over a surface into which they cannot penetrate,

and tap roots and downward-growing roots in general become impossible.

This superficial condition of the roots is indeed not peculiar to tropical forests, but may be seen anywhere where trees grow on the surface of almost bare rock. It is well seen on Southborough Common and elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, where, owing to the scantiness of the soil that covers the rock, the roots of the trees spread out in the manner I have described. In this instance the trees are quite dwarfed by these conditions, in consequence, no doubt, of the drought to which the roots are exposed; but in the forest where everything is damp even in the driest part of the year, they do not suffer in this way, and the superficial position of the main roots is no disadvantage to the trees, for the rootlets penetrating between the stony particles are continually immersed in moisture.

Such being the explanation of the entirely superficial position of the roots, the purpose of the root-buttresses becomes obvious. To such immensely lofty trees, exposed as they are periodically to a great lateral strain when the high winds of the tornado season blow, the radiating system of horizontal roots would afford but a precarious support, and some further provision is needed to ensure their stability. Such a support is provided by the circle of wide spreading buttresses that surround the base of the trunk; and it is to be noticed that these could only be efficient in the case of trees which are, as these are, perfectly vertical;

for clearly, in order that these buttresses may furnish the required support, it is essential that the centre of gravity of the trees should fall well within their radius.

Of the causes that produce the other peculiarities in the forest vegetation to which I have referred, it is not necessary to speak in much detail as they are tolerably obvious.

The great height and slenderness and the exclusively vertical direction of the trees are evidently due to the crowding together of the vegetation, by which it happens that each plant, almost entirely shaded in on all sides, grows towards a spot of light directly overhead. To the same circumstance is attributable the absence of lateral growth in the trees and their quasi acrogenous habits and appearance. These conditions may be observed in crowded plantations at home, although in a much less exaggerated form.

The degree of vertical elongation that occurs in the plants of the forest of Guinea is quite astonishing. Tall and slender as are the full-grown trees, the saplings are drawn out to an incredible degree of tenuity; in fact, it is only by standing immediately beneath them and looking up along the straight stems that one can convince oneself that they are not vines hanging from the upper branches of the large trees.

Two other classes of plants belonging to the upper layer of the forest remain to be noticed. These are the parasitical orchids and the lianas. The former I had no opportunity of examining closely as they were confined to the branches of the larger trees, which they thickly encrusted and which

were about 120 feet from the ground. Probably on close inspection they would have been interesting and beautiful, but seen from that distance through my field-glasses they had the appearance of tattered cabbages.

The lianas or monkey-ropes are among the most conspicuous and characteristic plant forms of the forest region, and to them is in a large measure due the weird and uncanny aspect of the scenery that makes so great an impression upon the traveller.

They present great variety in size and appearance; some are as slender as the thinnest twine, while others reach a diameter of twelve inches, and round these large specimens smaller forms are often found coiled, like the spun yarn round a "served" cable. The length of the larger specimens I was never able to determine, but I should think it was not less than eight hundred feet. They adopt every imaginable position; coiling along the ground in great serpentine curves, dropping like a plumb-line from the summits of the larger trees to the ground, or twisting in large spirals round the trunks. Sometimes they stretch quite tightly from one tree to another (a position that is somewhat difficult to explain), but their usual condition is that of immense loops or festoons hanging from tree to tree, like the "bights" of gigantic hawsers.

They are of great utility to man in several ways. In the first place two species *(Landolphia)* yield the African rubber, which if more carefully gathered would be of great value, and the smaller kinds are extensively used by the

natives as cord, by which they lash together the beams and rafters of their roofs, a purpose to which they are especially suited, not only by reason of their flexibility and strength, but also by the singular absence of leaves or branches on the greater part of the stems.

Among the peculiarities of the forest vegetation that appear to be due to local conditions, there is none that strikes the traveller more forcibly (or more unpleasantly) than the universal presence of thorns. Almost all the trees and shrubs are spiny, and most of the bushes present thorns of the most alarming dimensions. The trunk of the silk-cotton is studded with spikes from one to three inches long, and these are much more numerous and of larger size in saplings than in full-grown trees, and in the latter are more plentiful upon the branches than upon the trunk. The purpose that these spines serve is not in all cases obvious, but in a climbing palm that is somewhat common their use to the plant is very evident. This plant has a stem that is much too slender and flexible to support the weight of the head, and all its parts exhibit a remarkable degree of tenuity.

Its leaves are extremely long and slim, and when unsupported droop down almost perpendicularly. The narrow whip-like mid-rib of the leaf is armed throughout its length with a series of curved spines, the points of which are directed towards the base of the leaf, and it terminates in a pair of strong recurved hooks, like a two-pronged grapnel. The function of these hooks becomes obvious when the

manner of growth of the plant is observed. The youngest leaf, as in all palms, rises straight upward, and being extremely thin and slight and of great length, looks before it opens its leaflets, like a long fishing-rod. As the leaf opens and begins to be displaced by a new bud, it curves outward and presently commences to droop; but now the hooks at the end of the mid-rib catch on to some of the surrounding branches and, becoming fixed, furnish a fresh support to the palm, which in this way, by means of its natural grapnels, claws its way up through the tangle of vegetation towards the light, just as a vessel is dragged up a river against the stream by the use of its kedge anchors.

When the traveller notes the diversity in the character of the vegetation with which the surface is covered in different regions, he is apt to speculate upon the causes which determine the peculiarities of the flora of particular areas.

In the tract of country of which I am writing, a certain portion is clothed with dense forest; other parts form open grassy plains devoid of trees; while yet other portions are distinguished by an orchard-like character, or are covered with forests of Fan-palms. These differences in the flora are doubtless mainly determined by differences in the geological character of the surface. In the course of our journey we met with two classes of country,—dense forest and open, wooded or orchard-like country. Of these, the latter was almost entirely confined to regions where the surface

consisted of yellowish-grey soil derived from a soft non-ferruginous sandstone of similar colour; while the dense forest occupied almost exclusively districts where the surface was formed by red sandstone mixed with bright red clay—both rich in iron. It thus appears to me that the limit of the dense forest coincides with that of the red ferruginous rocks. Whether this opinion is correct must be determined when the district is more completely explored.

Having now glanced briefly at the principal characteristic forms of vegetation met with in the dense forest and the general physical conditions which prevail there, it remains to consider the *tout ensemble*, the general impression which this umbrageous woodland tends to produce upon the beholder.

The traveller from a temperate clime, when he first enters it, is filled with amazement and admiration at the extraordinary luxuriance of the vegetation, the exuberance of which is almost incredible to one who has not witnessed it. On all sides, above and around, a desperate struggle is going on for air and light. Every plant, from the tiniest herb to the immense Bombax, rises erect and slender, drawn out to an absurdly disproportionate height in an endeavour to force its way through the tangle of leafage to the upper air. The crowded vegetation fills up every available space; the earth is hidden by a mass of herbage and ferns; the fallen decaying trees are coated with thick, velvety moss; from out of the herbage spring the slender stems of bushes and small trees; while, towering far above

these, the giants of the forest rear their enormous trunks and close in the view with an almost unbroken canopy of

A FOREST OPENING BY THE OFFWIN RIVER.

foliage. Wherever one looks, branches and leaves and tree-trunks fill the field of vision. Immense creepers with stems as thick as a man's thigh hang from tree to tree in great

loops and festoons, twisting round trunks and branches and round one another, and binding trees and bushes into a tangled, impenetrable mass. And here and there in the dim light that prevails even at mid-day, looms the Titanic form of some ancient Bombax, its smooth bark coated with silvery lichen, its long branches, some 200 ft. overhead, encrusted with masses of orchids, and its immense roots coiling and twisting over the surface of the ground, like gigantic serpents.

Beautiful as the forest unquestionably is, there is yet in its aspect and in its whole atmosphere something unspeakably solemn and sad. The deathlike silence that prevails around, broken only at long intervals by the cry of some animal or bird, or the distant rustle of the foliage overhead, the absolute stillness of the air, the motionless vegetation, the reeking dampness, the gloomy twilight that never brightens, the giant trees wreathed with fantastic creepers, impart to the scene a strangeness that oppresses the mind and fills it with awe. The traveller who wanders through its dim recesses soon feels the sense of its beauty lost in that of its mournful grandeur, and there steals over him a profound feeling of solitude and a deep consciousness of the solemnity, majesty, and utter loneliness of this great ghostly wilderness.

CHAPTER IV

KUMASI

START from Kumasi—Message from the King—Entry into Kumasi—Reception by the Chiefs—The Gold Stool—The King—The Queen-Mother—The King dances before us—Fever—My House—A Kumasi House—Mural Sculptures—Okám Tree—Grand Palaver—Failure of the Mission—The Governor's Gift—Joseph's Snap-shot.

ON the morning of the 22nd Dec. we were all up betimes, and for once the sound of the morning bugle was almost welcome; for on this day we expected to enter Kumasi, and were not a little excited at the prospect of enjoying a privilege so seldom accorded to Europeans.

During the greater part of the forenoon we sauntered about the village discussing our chances of resting that night in the capital, and all agog to get on the road. About ten o'clock we commenced making preparations for the triumphal entry into the city; and by Odonkor's advice we put on our best clothes, adding such little ornamental touches as were possible, and caused the Hausas to don their Zouave jackets (they only wore their shirts and trousers on the march) and give their accoutrements a final polish.

About eleven o'clock the various preparations were com-

pleted, and having formed up the expedition, we took to our hammocks; for it would have been unspeakably shocking to the Royal personages of Kumasi to see the emissaries of the Great White Queen enter their city on foot, like common baggage carriers.

When we had advanced a short distance from Kasi we found that a road about 10 ft. wide had been cleared for us; that is to say, the herbage had been cut down so that we could advance without using our cutlasses. It had evidently been cleared that day expressly for us, and we travelled along it by the King's desire. But Futa assured me that it was not the regular road to the city, and was much more circuitous. He was further of opinion that the King's object in preparing this particular road was not, as we had imagined, to pay us a compliment and welcome us to his capital, but to prevent us from seeing a certain pit that (as Futa declared) lay close by the regular road; the pit in question being used as a general receptacle for the bodies of the victims of the sacrificial "customs" that have gained for Kumasi so evil a reputation.

After proceeding along this road, without incident, for about an hour, we reached a large clearing in the forest, and here we encountered a messenger from the King, who informed us that we were required to wait at this spot until His Majesty should signify his readiness to receive us. We at once despatched messengers to announce our arrival; then fixed up our chairs and waited impatiently for a reply. I have seldom found myself in less comfortable circum-

stances than I did while waiting for the King's permission to advance.

The large space being entirely cleared of trees and destitute of shade, we were exposed to the unmitigated rays of the noonday sun, which scorched us as though concentrated by an immense burning-glass; and to add to our discomfort the place swarmed with large black ants which crawled over us by thousands. They had evidently been disturbed in the clearing of the space, for many of them carried the larvæ of the rising generation of the community.

At the end of twenty-five minutes our messengers returned, saying that the King was "cleaning himself" and would send a messenger when he was ready. Thereupon we directed them to return to the King and point out to him that our men had neither food nor water, and that we had no shelter from the sun, and, moreover, were being slowly consumed by ants. This elicited a reply to the effect that the King would shortly be ready; and after the interchange of a few more messages of a similar kind His Majesty was at length pleased to intimate that he was actually prepared to receive us in his capital.

The expedition then fell in and advanced, the order of the procession being as follows:

The advance guard. The Band (five fifes and two side drums). Our three hammocks. The escort, with fixed bayonets. The carriers (two hundred in number) and the non-commissioned officers' wives. The rear guard.

As we proceeded, the band executed various inspiriting

airs, such as "Belle Mahone" and "Bonnie Dundee", and as we entered the precincts of the city, the rather ominous melody "Just before the Battle, Mother!" was performed, possibly from an idea on the part of the band-master that a skirmish was not the most remote of possibilities. And

THE OUTSKIRTS OF KUMASI.

indeed appearances would have rendered such a supposition by no means unreasonable, for the King's troops and other Ashantis poured out of the city in multitudes to greet us, all armed with long Dane guns which they discharged in all directions, with the utmost impartiality, causing an uproar that was perfectly deafening.

Now, when an African indulges in a *feu-de-joie* it is by no means the harmless affair that blank-firing is at home.

In the first place, he generally rams three times the proper charge of powder into his crazy barrel, and then fills it up with stones, slugs, pieces of iron or anything else of a suitable size that comes handy.

Consequently, to the shouts and yells of the multitude and the unceasing din of exploding firearms was added the whistling of slugs above our heads, and as these irregularly-shaped missiles are extremely erratic in their flight, we most devoutly wished that the hospitable Ashantis had adopted some other mode of testifying their joy at our arrival. As our procession approached the environs of Kumasi it was taken in tow by certain officials who were facetiously described to us as "guides", by whom it was led by the most circuitous route round the outskirts of the city, somewhat after the fashion of a travelling circus.

As soon as we were fairly in the city we began to pass numbers of chiefs who had taken up their positions at the side of the road. Each chief was seated on a stool and surrounded by his retainers, who mostly squatted on the ground, while an attendant stood behind him and held an umbrella over him. It was obvious that the umbrella was the distinguishing mark of the native aristocrat, and by its size and character an approximate estimate of the social position of the owner could be formed. The umbrellas, as we met with them, were in a crescendo series. The chiefs first encountered were shaded only by the small cotton umbrellas of gaudy colours that were imported from Europe, varied with ladies' fringed sunshades; but as we proceeded

more important-looking structures appeared, until, when we reached the stations of the chiefs of higher rank, we found them sitting under the shade of the large and gorgeous state umbrellas that are made in the country. These latter are of really excellent workmanship and of imposing dimensions. They commonly have a diameter of from six to eight feet, and are built on a stick from eight to ten feet high. The "works" are similar to those of an ordinary European umbrella, only that they are constructed entirely of wood, even to the ring that slides up and down the stick. The wire spring-catch that in British-made umbrellas keeps the ribs extended, is replaced by a wooden peg that is driven through a hole in the stick. The covering is generally of velvet of various bright colours, and is made in gores of contrasting hues, the seams being covered by gold braid; the dome, which is much deeper than in the European article, is surrounded by a "fly" or curtain about a foot deep, which in some of the most gorgeous examples is replaced by gold fringe. The cover is in many cases decorated with half-moons, stars, or figures of animals, cut out in gold cloth and stitched to the velvet; and the stick terminates in a gold ornament generally representing some animal, possibly the totem of its owner.

These minor chiefs we saluted from our hammocks in the native fashion by extending the hand towards them; but we were presently drawn up in front of a very portentous umbrella which, we were informed, belonged to the chief executioner. Feeling that so important a functionary

CHIEF WITH FAMILY SERVANTS AND OFFICIALS UNDER STATE UMBRELLA.

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was entitled to more than a mere wave of the hand, we descended from our hammocks and proceeded to shake hands with him. This aristocratic "Jack Ketch" was a genial and even a jocular-looking ruffian, and gave us a most cordial reception; and when I gave his hand a cordial grip he chuckled aloud and returned it with such interest that I wished I had not been so "demmed familiar." I noticed that in shaking hands the Ashantis do not grasp the hand firmly as we do, but take it quite gingerly, and when, from the force of habit, I exerted more pressure than they were accustomed to, they drew back somewhat and seemed a little doubtful of my intentions. After passing the "Lord High Executioner" we walked along an apparently interminable line of chiefs, each seated in state under his particular umbrella and surrounded by his crowd of dependents. Our linguist, Odonkor, preceded us and indicated the chiefs whose importance entitled them to shake hands with us; most of them received us with agreeable smiles and seemed pleased to receive us, but a few regarded us with grim solemnity and evidently looked upon us as intruders.

After having shaken the hands of some two or three score of chiefs, we approached the place where the King was sitting. His Majesty was surrounded by a large crowd of men and some boys, all sitting on the ground or on the curious and elegant seats which are made in the country; a band of musicians playing upon elephants' tusks struck prolonged, monotonous chords, and drummers now and again beat a few notes to mark some passing phase in the ceremony.

The drums were very numerous and various. The smallest had a head only four inches in diameter, and there was an ingenious arrangement of strings by which the skin could be tightened or relaxed (and the pitch of the note thus raised or lowered) at the will of the player. It was struck with what looked like the arm-bones of a large monkey, and emitted a sharp, woody, disagreeable note. Many of the drums were similar in shape to those described at Bekwe; one had the head covered with chalk, and was played, not by beating, but by drawing the end of the crooked stick across the head, the sound thus produced closely resembling that of a bass viol.

Among the drummers I noticed a man playing upon a long antelope's-horn, with which he produced various sounds like bugle calls. This horn and the drums were not played continuously or in concert. Each player struck a few notes and then ceased, another short solo by a different performer following after an interval. I learnt afterwards from an Ashanti fugitive who accompanied us to Bontúku, that each of these drum and horn calls has a particular meaning and corresponds to a certain definite sentence which is quite intelligible to the natives.

This accounted for the fact which I observed and thought rather curious at the time, that as each of us (Europeans) advanced to take the King's hand, a drummer standing by him struck a short and peculiar call. This custom of using drum signals is not peculiar to Ashanti, but is widely prevalent in other parts of West Africa and in some districts.

as, *e.g.*, Camaroons, is carried to a great pitch of elaborateness and perfection, so that I am informed complex messages can be sent from one hill to another over considerable tracts of country; and this, though to the stranger it may seem somewhat incredible, is much less so to one who has observed the remarkable skill and precision with which the West African natives perform upon their drums, the endless variety in tone of the latter, and the intricacy of the solos and concerted pieces that are executed upon them.

On the King's left hand an official of some kind stood waving a feather fly-brush, dancing meanwhile in a slow and rather foolish manner; while to the right was a stunted, deformed being of decidedly repulsive aspect, whose numerous necklaces and other ornaments of cowrie-shells marked him as a wizard or fetish-man. As we approached he was jerking his body and limbs about in grotesque and rather unpleasant-looking convulsions, apparently in imitation of an epileptic, and waving a horse-tail. Still nearer to the King were the bearers of the state swords—curious scimitar-shaped weapons entirely ornamental or symbolical in function.

Every native king and every important chief has one or more of these swords, which are borne before him on state occasions and are sent with any envoy or ambassador who may be despatched to neighbouring countries, as a guarantee and sign of authority. They generally consist of a broad flat blade cut out into a kind of fretwork, and the hilt consists of two large gold-covered knobs connected by a bar.

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In the specimen figured the spherical knobs are replaced by models of casks, probably palm-oil casks.

GOLD-HILTED STATE SWORD OF CHIEF YAU ATTA OF ATIFO.

The bearers of these swords were distinguished by a very remarkable *coiffure:* their woolly hair had been combed out straight and rolled up into rather stiff sausage-like ringlets, which hung down over their necks and on to their shoulders, imparting an extremely uncanny and horrible appearance.

WOODEN-HILTED ASHANTI SWORD, SHOWING THE FORM FROM WHICH THE STATE-SWORD IS EVOLVED.

Under a large and gorgeous canopy on the King's left hand stood a roomy arm-chair of native manufacture, studded with bright-headed nails and enriched with silver ornaments, and on this reposed the celebrated, royal, gold stool, the coronation seat of the Kings of Ashanti. On this the King takes his seat on his formal appointment to his royal office, and it is said he occupies it thereafter once

in every year; on all other occasions it occupies a place of honour upon a chair which is reserved for its use. The King (Kwaku Dua III or Prempeh) was seated on a similar chair, under his own umbrella and not under the canopy. He was a fairly good-looking young man rather inclined to be stout, with a smooth, sleek, reddish-brown skin. He was

ASHANTI STOOL.

somewhat effeminate-looking, in fact, hearing Odonkor say something about a Princess, I was at first a little uncertain about his sex until I was formally introduced to him. He wore a cardinal-red silk body-cloth richly embroidered, and his head was encircled by a fillet of silk, to the front of which was attached an oblong saffi of gold. A gold ornament was also attached to his hair at the summit of

the back of his head, and his hair was cut short in front and brushed or drawn back in such a manner as to cause the forehead to appear much lower and the back of the head much higher than they naturally were. Large numbers of massive gold trinkets were strung around his neck and wrists, and his feet were protected by handsome, well-fitting sandals.

The general effect of the group formed by the King and his attendants was extremely characteristic and full of barbarous magnificence, and somehow seemed to carry the mind back to the dawn of human civilisation. As I listened to the strange solemn, monotonous music and watched the various changes in the intricate, evidently symbolical ceremonial, while my eyes were dazzled by the gorgeous colours of the garments, the gaudy umbrellas and the glitter of the massive gold ornaments, I was irresistibly reminded, I cannot exactly tell why, of the life of Ancient Egypt and Assyria.

When I was presented to the King his hand was held out to me by one of his attendant chiefs, and throughout the proceedings he preserved a completely stolid, unmoved exterior, sitting in his chair, as devoid of motion and interest in what was going on as a seated statue at the portal of some Egyptian temple. After having saluted the King I was presented to the Queen Mother, an extremely lean, and frostily dignified old lady, whose head was shaven and highly polished, apparently with some oily substance; and the rest of her jet-black and somewhat

emaciated person appeared to have been similarly treated, for she shone as though she had received a skilfully applied coat of "Day and Martin." On this occasion my desire to exhibit a cordial and affable manner again led me into difficulties, for when the Queen Mother presented to me her small, soft, shapely hand I took it in mine and, as I made my bow, bestowed upon it a gentle and affectionate squeeze such as could not have hurt a baby; upon which, to my surprise and discomfiture, the old lady closed one eye and pursed up her mouth into the form of an ill-made buttonhole, murmuring at the same time something that I fear could not be construed into a benediction.

We now proceeded to the place where we were to sit while the King returned our salute, and having set up our chairs, and formed our men into as imposing a mass as possible, waited for the approach of the King. For the last couple of hours I had been experiencing certain familiar sensations that warned me of the approach of an attack of fever; a general bruised feeling as though I had been beaten with heavy sticks, combined with a sensation of having a gimlet driven into my right temple, construed by the light of numerous and disagreeable previous experiences, informed me that my body-temperature was already rising rapidly, and I sincerely hoped that the remainder of the ceremony would not be protracted. After waiting about a quarter of an hour the royal party began to file past, preceded by a large body of the King's soldiers armed with long fire-locks and a few Enfield rifles.

Then came the minor chiefs, who marched past us and saluted us individually by making a kind of chopping motion at us with the extended hand.

These were followed by chiefs of higher position, each of whom was presented to us by Odonkor, when we shook their hands. Near the end of this part of the procession was the hideous, little fetish man referred to above, who approached me and seized my hand, and then, kneeling down on the ground, rested his head on my knee. After remaining in this position a few moments he passed on to my two companions, and having paid his respects to them, he squatted down in the attitude of a frog and then hopped away after the fashion of that long-suffering batrachian, amidst shrieks of laughter from our men. The next part of the procession consisted of the musicians playing the long, ivory trumpets and beating various drums. These latter we had now a better opportunity of examining than when they were half hidden in the crowd that surrounded the King. The large war drums were mostly conical or cylindrical in shape, and their surfaces were black and shiny as though they had been coated with pitch; which appearance, I was told, was produced by rubbing them with human blood, presumably that of slain enemies. On all of the war drums large numbers of human jaw-bones were hung, and some were decorated with entire skulls. This gruesome custom of decorating the war drums with portions of deceased enemies is by no means peculiar to Ashanti, but is universal throughout the pagan countries of West Africa.

Following the musicians was a party of shield-bearers, and the shields that they carried had been, like the war drums, stained and painted with blood. These were followed by a body of armed men, I presume, the King's body-guard, who advanced dancing with furious excitement, flourishing their muskets, tossing their shields into the air and rolling over one another in the dust, yelling meanwhile with such vigour that we were nearly stunned by the uproar.

When these men had passed, the royal party approached, consisting of the King, his principal chiefs, the Queen Mother and the King's sisters. The King advanced and gravely shook our hands: he then retired a few paces and executed a slow and dignified dance, holding out his body-cloth with both hands in the fashion of a lady dancing a minuet. This was a highly complimentary and gracious act on the part of the King, for it signified that he received us as honoured and welcome guests. When he had concluded his dance he again advanced and shook our hands, preserving the same impassive and dignified demeanour that had characterised him when receiving us, and he then moved off. The ladies next saluted us, and the Queen Mother offered me the tips of her fingers with extreme caution; then after shaking the hands of about another score of chiefs we were left in peace to retire to the quarters that had been assigned to us. By this time my fever had increased to such an extent that I was nearly dazed by the intense headache, and it was with great difficulty that I managed, by leaning on the shoulder of the faithful and

sympathetic Joseph, to stagger to the house that had been set apart for my use.

Great was my relief on arriving there to be able to spread a mat on the cool, clay floor and lie down in peace; to exchange the blinding glare of the sun, the din and uproar of drums and trumpets, exploding firearms and yelling multitudes, the clouds of dust and the overpowering odour of the perspiring crowds, for the grateful shadow of the thick thatched roof and the quiet and seclusion of the little hut.

In a very short time Joseph had the kit bag unpacked, and the little camp bed set up and furnished with its sheet and rug, and when Vanderpuye, my apothecary, brought in a supply of five-grain quinine pills, which he placed (in the lid of a biscuit tin) on a stool by the bedside, together with a glass of water, I had all that I was likely to want; and having given orders that no one was to enter my private yard or compound. I settled myself to wait patiently for the fever to subside.

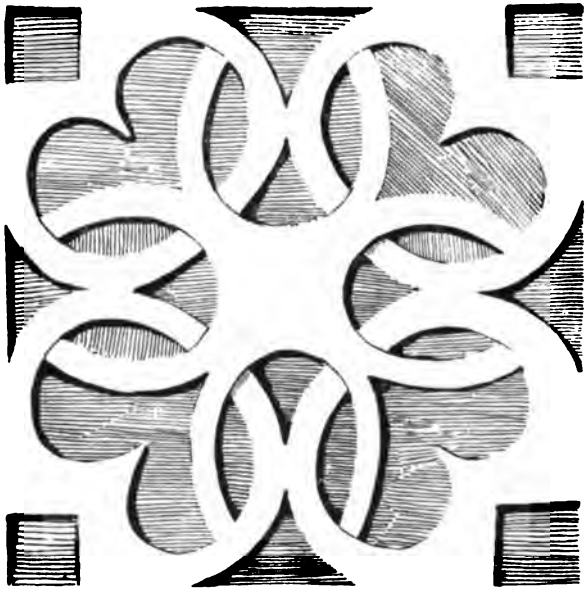
The next day as the fever still continued and the headache was little diminished, life was rather a blank, and I did little but lie and stare up at the rude rafters of the roof, or listlessly watch the lizards scampering over the roof of the next hut. Once or twice a bird flew into my hut and perched on my baggage in the corner; numerous lizards chased one another up and down the rafters of the roof, one a slender, smooth-skinned skink-like species, who disputed possession with the large scarlet-headed stellios. Several of the latter cautiously descended the walls, turning their knowing-look-

ing, beady, little eyes on me as they came down; and one big, handsome fellow with a splendid ultramarine body and a head and tail that looked as if carved out of red coral, ran about the floor quite close to my bed. Now and again an ant would emerge from some crevice, when the lizard would dart up to it and with a flash of his tongue and a snap of his red jaws the insect would vanish, and then my little friend would cock his head at me with almost self-satisfied air, as though he would say, "Now you couldn't do that." One or two rats who resided in the vicinity also called, but they were not disposed to be intimate; they crept along the top of the wall and peered down at me, and then, having satisfied their curiosity, they went away. Outside the compound in the adjacent streets some festive gatherings were being held, for there came to me faintly the sound of drums and the rhythmical chanting and clapping of hands, that showed that the people were dancing; but I was nearly deaf with the quinine that I had taken, so these sounds did not annoy me.

The house in which I lived was extremely comfortable. It was about twelve feet by eight, and the floor, raised on a platform of clay, was nearly three feet above the ground. The thick palm-leaf thatch kept off the sun admirably, so that the interior was fairly cool, and it was, like all the Ashanti houses that I saw, extremely clean, and, having only three walls, I need not say it was well ventilated.

On the 24th (Christmas Eve) I was somewhat better, so I had my bed turned round that I might examine at my leisure

the hut opposite mine, which was of a curious and unusual design. Its floor was not raised more than a few inches from the ground, but to compensate for this it had a fourth wall, pierced in the centre by a wide doorway. It had also a small verandah, the roof being supported on two clay



PANEL OVER DOORWAY OF HUT IN AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT KUMASI.

arches, the design of which I have no doubt had been copied from the Dutch houses of Elmina. The arches were ornamented with designs in relief, and were whitewashed, while the lower part or dado was of the usual polished red clay and covered with an incised spiral ornament.

The following day being Christmas Day I essayed to get up to dinner, and by way of lending additional joyousness

to the proceedings I issued three bottles of champagne from the hospital stores. The dinner was not, however, as far as I was concerned, a great success. It is true we had a tinned Christmas pudding which we ignited amidst the applause of our domestics and the astonished exclamations of one or two Ashanti visitors; but malarial fever does not tend to sharpen the appetite, and I presently went back to bed with the impression that the Kumasi fowl must be a most athletic bird and a great pedestrian, but is not adapted by nature for the preparation of what Joe called "chickum cottreks."

On the following day, however, I was much better, and although my ears still buzzed and my knees were decidedly "groggy", I struck my name off the sick list and went forth with Joe and my orderly, Onitchi, to view the city.

Kumasi was a great disappointment to me, and my disappointment increased as I walked round and examined the town. It was not merely that so little existed, but that so much had been destroyed. As it stands, or then stood, the town was nothing more than a large clearing in the forest, over which were scattered, somewhat irregularly, groups of houses. The paths were dirty and ill kept, and between the groups of houses large patches of waste ground intervened, and on these, amidst the tall, coarse grass that covered them, were to be seen the remains of houses that had once occupied them. These houses once stood in wide and regular streets, but since the destruction of the city in 1874 the natives do not seem to have had heart to rebuild them. Yet there remained some few vestiges to

show what Kumasi had been in its palmy days before the "civilising hand" of the European was laid upon it. A few broad, well-kept streets still existed, lined by houses,

KUMASI.

the admirable construction, careful and artistic finish and excellent repair of which showed how great is the difference between the industrious, intelligent, cleanly Ashantis and the slovenly, indolent natives of the Coast Countries.

On all hands, indeed, amidst the universal ruin and decay, were hints of departed prosperity and evidences of a culture far superior to anything seen in the littoral regions; and as I looked round on the blighted city with its demolished buildings and its demoralised citizens, I could not help reflecting on the strange and regrettable fact that its ruin had been accomplished by a nation that yearly spends millions on the conversion of the heathen and the diffusion of civilisation.

Among the numerous objects of interest in Kumasi there were none that made a greater impression on me or seemed more significant than the sculptures with which most of the better-class houses were adorned.

Our own house was most profusely decorated with these, and I thus had an opportunity of examining them at my leisure and of making numerous sketches; and I will now describe our residence in some detail, remarking that, although not in as good repair as some in the King's quarter, it seemed to be a representative house of the better class.

When I speak of a house I mean—to use a lawyer's term—the entire "messuage and premises" contained within the enclosing fence. These fences are generally of cane-like grass-stalks, palm-leaves, wood, or in some cases clay, forming solid walls.

In our house the fence consisted in different parts of these various materials, and most of the interior divisions were of clay.

The large compound, then, was enclosed by a fence

and contained eleven huts somewhat irregularly placed, and so arranged that the compound was divided up into a number of small yards which were connected by narrow and crooked passages, the whole forming a somewhat puzzling labyrinth. The compound was entered by a general gateway guarded by a wooden door, and the separate yards had gateways which, however, were without doors. The jambs of these latter gateways were formed of clay, being in most cases the ends of party walls separating the different yards; and in nearly all cases their faces formed somewhat rude pilasters, the dies or dados of which were ornamented.

The huts within the compound were of various sizes and designs. The largest was used as the mess-room, and although large was not particularly ornate. The one that formed my bedroom was of medium size, about twelve feet by eight feet inside; it stood upon a base or platform of clay about two feet six inches high, the front of which was covered with sculpture, and the centre occupied by a rough step. The material was the red clay, the universal building material in Kumasi and, indeed, throughout Ashanti, the surface dressed so as to be quite smooth. There were only three walls, the front being, as is usually the case, quite open. The front ends of the two side walls were, however, finished by the addition of rough pilasters which served to strengthen them as well as to improve their appearance. The hut immediately opposite mine has been already described as well as the general plan of arrangement of the remaining huts. One hut was of specially

elaborate construction and very highly ornamented, and merits a separate description. It was, with the exception of the mess-hut, the largest in the compound and much more handsome than any of the others. Its floor was divided into three parts. In the centre was a large space raised about eighteen inches above the level of the ground; at one end was a platform or dais raised another eighteen inches above the central floor, while at the opposite end was a space about the same area as the dais, on the same level as the central floor, from which it was separated by a pair of arches. This hut presented examples of every variety of architectural ornament that I met with in Kumasi. These sculptures may be divided into three classes: (1) Simple incised pattern on flat surfaces. (2) Designs in low relief. (3) Perforated designs or fretwork.

The incised ornaments were not numerous. They were generally very simple in character and were executed in the red clay, being used to relieve extensive flat surfaces, such as the outer walls of the houses.

The raised designs were more elaborate, some of them, indeed, being extremely intricate, and were used in two ways. Executed in the red clay and in comparatively simple forms they were used to enrich the fronts of the bases of houses, the lower members of walls or the dies of pilasters. In more complex forms they were employed as panels in the middle members of walls, in friezes, in interior dados and in tympana or gable-ends. When thus used they were invariably coated with a white distemper

which, however, was never applied to the lower members of the exterior, this always being left red, and thus contrasting very agreeably with the white upper portion. The red clay when used in the production of ornament, was, as I have mentioned, usually smoothed on the surface so as to acquire a dull polish, and in the finer examples the surface was treated with great care so that quite a fine polish was produced. In the small pipe shown in the accompanying figure, which is made from this clay, the surface is nearly as smooth and glistening as in a meerschaum of English manufacture. All these reliefs had a flat surface, *i.e.*, the relief was similar in character to a printer's type or a woodcut block: the surface of the design was devoid of the modelling seen in European bas-reliefs, and was, in fact, simply an ornamental outline. The sharp, angular edges which would have been difficult to produce in clay, and if produced would have been extremely liable to be broken, were ingeniously formed by outlining the design with strips of the midrib of the oil-palm: two such strips were generally carried round the edge of the design, and the sunken space between them formed a kind of primitive cavetto moulding.

ASHANTI PIPE OF RED CLAY.

The third variety, the perforated or fretted ornaments, were almost exclusively used in one form of construction. In many of the better-class houses, as in the one we are now considering, the front, instead of being entirely open, was closed in at each end, the central part only being open. In

some cases the central opening was quite narrow, forming merely a doorway of ordinary width, while in others, as in this particular house, a comparatively small space at each end was thus closed in, the greater part of the house remaining open in the front. In the former case the doorway was generally closed by a curtain, while in the latter arrangement privacy was obtained by hanging before the opening a screen or blind of a kind of open matting. But whether the front wall was extensive or limited, it was nearly always formed by the perforated work referred to above, and in the present instance the short front walls were formed of a lattice-work of very elegant design.

DESIGN MODELLED IN RELIEF ON FRONT OF PLATFORM OF A HOUSET A KUMASI.

The most common motives in these designs were (1) the spiral or volute: (2) a kidney-like form derived from the volute: (3) the circle (rather rare): (4) the zig-zag: (5) a form somewhat like the stone arrow-head so commonly used as an ornament by the Hausas, Soudanese and Arabs; and various rectangular and other forms which I am not able to classify.

To return now to the consideration of our house. The ornamental parts of the front consisted of lattices, the design of which presented a combination of the volute, the

rectangle and a number of crossed, diagonal trabeculæ with large interspaces. Above these, and passing along the whole length of the house, was a frieze combining a large zig-zag broken up by a smaller rectangular zig zag with the kidney-shaped double volute referred to above. On examining the interior, the wall of the central apart-

ORNAMENT IN RELIEF ON THE DIE OF A PILASTER.

ORNAMENT IN RELIEF ON THE DIE OF A PILASTER.

ORNAMENT IN RELIEF ON THE DIE OF A PILASTER.

ment was seen to be occupied by a frieze, a central panel and a dado; and it is not a little curious to observe that the arrangement and proportion of these members were precisely similar to those used by architects in European buildings.

The frieze in this case was formed by a series of spirals so arranged as to resemble a conventional representation of waves. The central space of the wall was occupied by a very curious design, somewhat recalling the wheel of a

Roman chariot. This is the more remarkable inasmuch as wheels in any form are quite unknown either in Ashanti or in any of the interior countries. It is the only design of the kind that I saw, and very rarely did I meet with any examples of the introduction of circular forms into the native ornaments. The dado on this wall was formed by a pair of arches, and the same design was repeated on the end of the exterior wall.

Turning to the left we observe the pair of arches which divide the "hall" from the end apartment. The central column and the two pilasters supporting these arches were placed upon somewhat rude bases which, like the columns themselves, were square in plan. The arches were undecorated excepting that the frieze of the hall was carried over them, but the central spandrel was occupied by an ornament consisting of a triangle and two volutes. The interior walls of the chamber were enriched by a frieze, the principal motive of which was the kidney-shaped double volute, two panels of the arrow-head design, and a dado produced by a variation of the same design.

ORNAMENT IN RELIEF ON THE SPANDREL OF A PAIR OF ARCHES IN THE AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT KUMASI

The walls of the chamber with the dais, to the right of the "hall", were decorated by a frieze of the same design

as that on the exterior, and panels of zig-zag work. I do not think there was any dado in this chamber, at any rate I find no reference to any in my sketches.

It will be observed that the ornamental forms used in the different parts of the building were evidently chosen with a view to their harmonising with one another; in the "hall" and in the left-hand chamber curved forms prevail in frieze, panel and dado; while in the front of the ex-

PORTION OF A FRIEZE IN THE AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT KUMASI.

terior and in the interior of the right-hand chamber angular forms and straight lines predominate. Turning now to the exterior of the house we find the right-hand end wall—the only one of which a good view was obtainable—elaborately decorated, and here, as in the interior, the wall was divided into its various members, the lowest of which was the undecorated plinth. Above this, in the centre, was a large double spiral boldly modelled in rather high relief. On either side of this the large heavy dies of the pilasters at the sides of the end wall presented a similar design inverted and surmounted by a curious conventional birdlike form, also in rather high relief. The whole of this lower portion of the wall was in the polished red clay, and the sculptures differed from those in the upper part, not only in their high relief and bold treatment, but also in the fact

END OF A HUT IN AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT KUMASI
(THE KING'S GUEST-HOUSE).

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that they were modelled in rounded contours in distinct contrast to the flat, type-like form of the sculptures of the upper portion of the wall. This latter consisted of two round arches supporting a square panel filled with a somewhat intricate design. The central portion contained a circle enclosing a rectangular cross, the centre of which was occupied by a lozenge. Outside the circle were four double spirals, the upper and lower being formed by the extremities of zig-zag bands. At each side of the panel was a flat pilaster without a capital, and above the panel the undecorated tympanum. As to the roof, it consisted of a framework of unsquared tree-boughs lashed together with the flexible stems of small creepers, covered by a layer of thatch formed by the leaves of the oil palm.

The foregoing description will enable the reader to form an idea of the general appearance and character of a better-class house in Kumasi, although it will be understood that no two houses are alike in the details of their ornaments; and it will be seen that although small in size and simple in design—as indeed might be expected to be the case where the clemency of the climate allows the natives to live almost entirely out of doors—the designation "mudhuts" so commonly applied to them by travellers is most misleading and inappropriate and conveys an entirely false idea.

In addition to the ornaments of the house that I have just described, my sketch-book contains notes of various sculptures that attracted my attention on other buildings, examples of which are represented in the accompanying

drawings, and it is a matter of great regret to me that the shortness of our stay and the unsatisfactory state of my health prevented me from examining more minutely and extensively the mural ornaments of this most interesting city. It is greatly to be regretted that previous travellers with greater opportunities have made no collections of these

DIE OF A PILASTER WITH DESIGN MODELLED IN RELIEF IN AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT KUMASI.

DIE OF A PILASTER WITH DESIGN MODELLED IN RELIEF.

sculptures, and especially that Bowdich, who resided for several months in Kumasi while Ashanti was in the height of its power, should have brought away but a few ambiguous drawings and still more ambiguous verbal descriptions.

The wholesale destruction of native houses that took place when Kumasi was burned by the British troops in

1874 is likewise a matter for great regret on the part of anthropologists; while the Vandalism displayed during the expedition of 1895, when several of the largest and most ancient houses of the suburb of Bàntama were set on fire, apparently with no other object than that of amusing the soldiers, cannot be sufficiently condemned.

PIPE-BOWLS OF BLACK, POLISHED CLAY FROM KUMASI.

In addition to the clay mouldings on the walls of houses, a considerable amount of clay work, more or less elaborately modelled, is produced in Kumasi. This work is of two kinds. In one the red clay is coated with red ochre and polished, while the incised lines and depressions are filled with white cement; in the other, which is the more

common, the clay has the surface blackened and rather highly polished.

The principal articles produced are platters, dishes, jars—some of which have highly ornamental stoppers—and pipe-bowls. The latter are very beautifully designed and profusely ornamented, and present an astonishing variety of patterns; in fact, although I have seen a very large number, I have never seen two exactly similar.

FOUR PIPE-BOWLS AND A JAR-STOPPER OF BLACK CLAY WARE, KUMASI.

During my stay in Kumasi on this occasion I visited the King at his palace, but my visit was too brief to admit of my making any notes of the details of its decoration. I noticed, however, that it was similar in general plan to our house, but on a larger scale, and the decorations more profuse and elaborate. It was extremely clean and well-kept, the red bases well polished and the floors perfectly free from dust or dirt; and this, added to the fact of its being occupied by the King and his clean, gaily attired dependents and furnished with the quaint and generally artistically designed domestic articles, furniture and utensils, its floors covered with coloured mats and its doorways filled with

brilliant-hued curtains, imparted an air of comfort, luxury, and taste that contrasted strongly with the emptiness and disorder of our temporary residence. One of the first objects of my search was the remaining portion of the stone palace of Koffi Kari-Kari. When found, it proved like the rest of the city, a disappointment. I could only see a part of it as it was hidden by trees and lay inside a fenced compound, but it appeared to have been a building of no great size. It was built of the local red sandstone, probably much in the style of the Dutch houses at Elmina, but as I could see very little of the ruins I was not in a position to form any judgment as to its design. I should think, however, that it was almost certainly copied from the houses at Elmina (which town was formerly much frequented by Ashantis, if it was not actually an Ashanti possession) and was very probably built by workmen imported from there. Elmina is the only West African town in which I have seen native houses built of stone (I do not consider houses built in the European style by workmen trained by Europeans, "native houses"), and here the natives evidently learned the art from the Dutch settlers. Throughout this part of Africa, whatever style of house is built, the material is either clay or some temporary material, and the art of working stone seems to be quite unknown.

One of the features of Kumasi that early attracted my attention was the frequent occurrence in the streets of a very curious kind of tree. This is probably well known to botanists, but I had not met with it previously, nor do I remember observing it in any other town.

The peculiarity that gave it such a singular appearance consisted of a remarkable tendency to throw out what appeared to me to be aerial roots which ramified over the exterior of the trunk and main branches, anastomosing with one another and frequently disappearing into the trunk. The first impression produced was that the tree, which was a somewhat large species, had no main trunk at all, its place being occupied by a bundle of interwoven branches and aerial roots. I believe this peculiar tree was especially common in the suburb of Bàntama [1] (where was situated the burial place of the Kings, the royal treasury and the headquarters of the fetish men), and I imagine that its rather weird and uncanny aspect has caused it to be chosen for that locality. I have no doubt that these are the *Okúm* trees after which the city is named (*Kum-asi*—under the Okúm tree), and they probably occur in the other towns of the same name which are to be found in the district.

On the afternoon of the 26th we had a grand palaver with the King, whose party was arranged in much the same manner as when he received us on our arrival.

When we had planted our table and chairs opposite His Majesty at a respectful distance, a number of well-meaning individuals among the King's people commenced yelling "tiyúr" by way of obtaining silence, and as soon as it was possible for him to make himself heard at all the Commissioner commenced to roar out a speech, setting

[1] Common, alas! no longer, for most of them were destroyed with dynamite by the late expedition.

STREET IN KUMASI.

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forth the objects of our visit in stentorian tones, a display of lung power that seemed to me quite superfluous, seeing that nobody understood a word that he said. At the conclusion of this oration Odonkor took up the strain and translated to the King as much of the Commissioner's speech as he understood (and probably a good deal more). After the King had conferred for a while, His Majesty's linguist, a small, long-legged hunchback, replied in the high-pitched, Punch-like tones peculiar to those afflicted persons. It was at once evident from the linguist's speech that our mission to the King would be a failure, and for a very obvious reason. The loan for which Prempeh had asked from the Government was to have been quite a private and personal affair, and now the matter had been blurted out before the whole assembly of chiefs. The natural consequence was that the King now repudiated all knowledge oft he matter, although he assured us he was much gratified by our visit. This business consequently fell through, and the remainder of the palaver dealt with the war with the Adansis, the condition of the trade roads and the everlasting human sacrifices. A somewhat amusing incident occurred towards the end of the palaver. The Governor (Sir Brandford Griffith) had sent as a present to the King, a packet of sunflower seeds, thinking that, as they are much appreciated by poultry, the cultivation of these gorgeous plants might be highly advantageous to the people of Ashanti. This was explained to Odonkor, who forthwith translated the message to the King, at the same

time handing over the seeds. We thought we detected an expression of amusement on the faces of the august personages of Ashanti as they received the precious package, but we had no suspicions.

It transpired, however, in the evening, that Odonkor had never heard the word "poultry" before and, following the usual practice of African interpreters, had guessed at the probable meaning of the message: the result being that he had descanted at great length to the King on the remarkable virtues of sunflower seeds when used in the form of *poultices*.

I was rather anxious to obtain a portrait of the King, and after the palaver I asked him to allow me to photograph him. To this he readily assented, and I was beginning to prepare the camera, when a number of the chiefs interposed, declaring that such a thing could not under any circumstances be permitted. I determined, nevertheless to take the first opportunity of getting a "shot" at him unobserved, and when I heard that he intended to visit us at our house on the following day, I laid my plans, with this object in view, with a degree of cunning upon which I reflect with pride.

I commenced by arranging our scanty furniture in such a way that the King would be compelled to sit in a particular spot, and on this spot I focussed the camera, while Joe sat as the King's proxy. To the ingenious Joseph I now communicated the details of this deep laid plot, which were as follow. The camera being focussed, the

instantaneous shutter set, and all ready for action, Joe was to wait until the palaver was well under way and then stroll into the compound, with a duster, in a quite casual and inconsequent manner, and commence to unobtrusively dust my camp-kit, gradually working his way towards the camera. He was then to proceed to dust this instrument, and when a favourable opportunity occurred, touch the trigger of the shutter, when the photograph would be taken.

Joe was delighted with the scheme, and after one or two rehearsals seemed to be quite perfect in his part, so I was extremely confident as to the result. As soon as the King's trumpeters were heard approaching I slipped a plate into the camera, set the shutter, and retired to my seat at the table in readiness for our visitors. When the King entered, his stool-bearer placed the royal seat in precisely the spot I had anticipated, and as His Majesty sat down I reflected with glee that he was fairly in the centre of the field. As soon as the King was seated an attendant stationed himself behind him and held over him the great velvet-covered umbrella, notwithstanding that the palaver took place inside the mess-hut. This rather annoyed me as a shadow was thus cast over the King's face, but I was still hopeful, and looked anxiously for Joe's appearance. At length that sable son of Belial entered the compound, but instead of coming in as I had directed, in a casual unobtrusive way, he crept in on tip-toe, with such an absurdly melodramatic air of secrecy that the King and chiefs all turned round and stared at him aghast. This completely

disconcerted Joseph, who thereupon stood still for some seconds in the middle of the compound, gazing towards us with the expression of an imbecile; he then backed on to the camera—nearly capsizing it—and finally, suddenly remembering what he was required to do, he flourished his duster, made a dab at the trigger, half releasing the shutter and leaving it wide open, and then rushed out of the compound, amidst the jeers of a crowd of our domestics who, being in the secret, had been watching through the gate.

CHAPTER V

NORTH ASHANTI

SANSO—Crossing the Bridge—New Year's Eve—Approaching the Open Country—The Tanno River—Gigantic Fishes—The Fetish Man—Odomási—A Fetish Dance—The Sakrobúndi Fetish—The Open Country—Interest of the Natives in our doings—Faténta—Invasion by Driver Ants—Jáman Villages—Character of the Open Country.

ON the following morning (28th December) at a quarter-past seven we marched out of Kumasi, and although I should have been glad to stay longer to examine in more detail the sculpture on the buildings, most of our party were by no means sorry to see and smell the last of that historic city. After our six days' stay in the open space of the town it seemed very strange to plunge suddenly into the gloomy twilight of the forest. The transition was singularly abrupt from the dazzling sunlight to the deep sombre shadow: one minute we were marching through the glaring streets of the city, the next we had passed through a narrow opening in the lofty wall of dense wood that on all sides surrounded it, and were shut in from the light of day by an unbroken canopy of foliage.

When I had recovered from the effects of this sudden

transition, however, it was evident to me that the forest here was less dense in some respects than that through which we had passed further south. The large trees were not less numerous nor was the middle layer, that of the bushes and small trees, any thinner, but the undergrowth proper was very much reduced so that the ground seemed much more open.

At 2.30 we halted at the village of Sanso and set up the camp, and when we had assembled our party we found it augmented by a Krepe woman, evidently a slave as the marks on her face showed, who begged our protection. She stated that her husband had been killed and that she expected to be put to death if she returned to Kumasi, and on this representation, although an Ashanti chief had followed us, claiming her as his maid-servant and flatly contradicting her statements, we decided to allow her to proceed with us.

Towards evening the temperature fell considerably, and when I went to bed it was so cold that I was glad to have a couple of blankets as well as my rug for a covering. During the night the thermometer reached 55° in my tent, the lowest temperature I have ever experienced in West Africa. The men, particularly the carriers, suffered a great deal from the cold, for they slept in the open and had no covering but the cotton cloths that formed their ordinary wearing apparel.

We marched out of Sanso at day-break on the 29th, feeling very chilly and miserable. The air was exceedingly raw, and dense mist, consisting of invisible particles of water

like a fine rain, enveloped the trees and saturated everything. The dew which had condensed on the foliage dripped down upon us in a continuous shower, the vegetation reeked with moisture and the ground was damp and sodden. The men had suffered extremely from the cold and the heavy dew, and an incessant chorus of coughing arose from the column as it crept through the misty darkness, and we were all very glad when, after three hours of steady marching, we reached the Offwin river and were able to warm ourselves in the sun on its banks.

The Offwin river, the western branch of the Pra, rises at Mampon and joins the eastern branch, the Birrim, which rises near Abetifi and flows through Akem, about 10 miles below Pra-su. At the place where we encountered it, it was 66 feet wide, deep, muddy and rather rapid. It was spanned by the trunk of a silk-cotton tree by way of a bridge, and a long liana was stretched across parallel to this to serve as a hand-rail.

I had great misgivings about that bridge. There had been no attempt to make a flat surface to walk upon, this being unnecessary for the bare-footed natives, but to a man in heavy field-boots the round surface—giving place in one part to a high sharp ridge—looked far from inviting, and I commenced the journey with no little trepidation. When I had fairly started I found that the "monkey-rope" guide was a complete delusion, for, being fixed only at its ends, it swung completely out of reach. I was therefore compelled to rely on my powers of balancing, and an un-

commonly bad five minutes I spent as I crept along, expecting every moment to topple over into the muddy river that swept swiftly along a few feet beneath me. The perilous journey was, however, completed without disaster, and when I stood once more on solid ground and looked back at the string of carriers following me across the bridge I was exasperated, remembering my own sufferings during the transit, to observe the unconcerned way in which these barefooted ragamuffins strolled across, smoking their pipes and balancing their heavy loads as easily as though they were on a turnpike road.

During the day we crossed a great number of small rivers nearly all running in a westerly direction, and one larger than the rest, called Ofe, ran parallel to the road for some distance. This is a tributary of the Offwin (as are probably all the rest), and I learned that it rises at Ofesu, a place about twelve miles east of Fufu. This latter village we reached about 2 p.m. and camped there.

Like most of the Ashanti villages it was extremely clean and orderly in appearance, and I could not help contrasting it in this respect with the dirty, untidy villages of the coast region.

I was particularly impressed by three fetish houses, the construction of which was really artistic. The front walls on either side of the doors were formed of the fretwork that I have already described, and were coated with white distemper. I ventured to inspect the interior of one through the interstices of the fretwork, and I observed that the

house was furnished with a number of highly decorated chairs and stools in addition to a large and curious image; but my observations were cut short by the chief fetish man, who came and tapped me on the shoulder and requested me to restrain my curiosity. This fetish house

IN THE CAMP AT FUFU.

appears in the accompanying illustration of our tea party; in which also may be seen an excellent portrait of our guide Koffi Dabbi, a handsome athletic Jáman and a remarkably good-natured, amiable fellow. He was distinguished (as may be seen by referring to his portrait) by a row of Saffis which he wore as a fillet round his head.

Saffi, I may explain, is the Mandingo name of a little case, usually of leather, containing a portion of the Koran or other sacred writing, which is almost invariably worn by the pious Mussulman in West Africa: it is usually provided with a plaited leather cord by which it is slung round the neck, like the Agnus Dei worn by a devout Roman Catholic, to which article indeed it is in many respects closely analogous. Primarily of course, the Saffi is a mark of the Mahommedan faith, but among the superstitious and ignorant it degenerates into a mere charm or amulet, and as such is worn by pagans as well as Mussulmans, as in the case of our friend Koffi who worshipped his native fetish.

On the 31st we made a very long march, being on the road from 6.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. with the exception of a halt of an hour and a half. Not only was the march a very long one, but it was extremely trying by reason of the number of rivers we had to ford and the swamps through which we had to wade. When we reached our destination in the evening we were all, officers, men and carriers, extremely fatigued.

Our halting-place was a little hamlet close to and forming an appendage of the town of Insúta. There appeared to have been some trouble at this latter town, which we were told was at present deserted, and the hamlet in which we put up had been built as a temporary settlement by the fugitives, pending the establishment of more peaceful conditions. The huts were very small and were built of sticks tied

together with the thin stems of creepers: they were extremely airy and well ventilated, rather resembling large wicker bird-cages, so, as the men seemed too tired to put up the tents, we determined to take up our quarters in two of them.

After dinner, in consideration of its being New Year's Eve, we held a mild carouses, and having drunk to absent friends and wished one another a Happy New Year, we sat and yarned until, finding that we continually fell asleep over one another's anecdotes, we thought it time to turn in. The huts were furnished with bedsteads constructed of sticks lashed together with creepers, forming structures somewhat like large wooden gridirons: on these we deposited ourselves, rolled up in our blankets, and soon slept like dormice.

RUDE WOODEN IMAGE.

Soon after starting on the following day we passed through a large empty village which I was told was called Abuchum, but which was, I believe, the deserted Insúta. A prominent object in this village was a large and well-built fetish house which was decorated by a row of little bags and packages (containing fetish charms) suspended by strings from the eaves in front of the door. As the latter stood ajar, I ventured to enter and explore. A rude altar of clay stood against the middle of the back wall, and this was covered by a heap of articles, evidently connected with the worship of the fetish.

Among the rubbish I founda curious clay image, the base of which had apparently formed the stopper of a jar, a very rude wooden figure, and two tiny models of Ashanti stools. I also unearthed several pots, the mouths of which were sealed up with clay, upon removing which I found them to be filled with eggs. I observed that eggs were among the commonest of the offerings made to the fetish, and their use in this manner was no doubt symbolical.

IMAGE OF BLACK CLAY FROM INSUTA.

Outside the house I noticed the skulls of a buffalo, a leopard and a boar made into a heap and crowned with a circular slab of ironstone, while shortly after passing the village I encountered the spoor of some large species of antelope. These skulls and the antelope were almost the first indication met with by our party of the presence of large game, which in the heart of the forest seemed to be conspicuous by its absence.

During the mid-day halt I noticed that the surface consisted of a distinct organic mould of a blackish, peaty character, on which numerous worm-casts of small size were to be seen. This also was a new feature, for up to this

time the surface had been exclusively composed of a coarse, gravelly material, rather resembling brick-rubbish, formed by the disintegration of the ferruginous sandstone which formed the surface rock over the entire district. These new features in the character of the country and the fauna led me to hope that we were now approaching the confines of the forest. The reports of the natives, as well as of travellers who had visited Salaga and its neighbourhood, represented the country lying to the north of Kumasi as a great open plain; and after a month's rapid and laborious marching through the gloomy recesses of the dark, still, silent forest, we were all yearning for a stretch of open country and blue sky.

We had hoped long before this to have exchanged the weary sameness of endless trees and bushes, of dense undergrowth and the almost unbroken roof of foliage for a wide expanse of rolling plain stretching away to a distant horizon, with the open vault of heaven above us and open air and sunlight around. We began to have the feeling of being shut up in some vast prison, and I cannot tell how eagerly we looked for any sign of a thinning of the forest and of our approach to the open country. But with the exception that I have mentioned no such signs appeared: we journeyed on through forest as shady and sombre as any we had passed, crossing numberless streams, (nearly all running in a westerly direction, but clearer now than those we had crossed further south) and still the end of our day's march brought us only to a

forest village of the usual type, a somewhat large village called Jomo. The march had been a rather unusually long one, and the number of streams and other obstructions had made it peculiarly wearisome, and as a result our men and carriers were quite knocked up by the time we reached the halting-place.

On the following morning when I assembled the men for the usual medical inspection, I found that of the hundred Hausas, no less than thirty-two were on the sick list, while of the two hundred carriers, over a dozen were unfit for duty.

I consequently reported that the expedition would not be able to proceed, and it was decided that we should remain for two days at Jomo for the men to rest, and recover from their various ailments. The leisure which we thus unexpectedly enjoyed I devoted to making a number of observations to determine the latitude of the place, and in searching for mollusca. While encamped at Jomo I received a visit from an Ashanti fugitive who had sought our protection; he was not very communicative, but I managed to induce him to sing over to me some of the trumpet calls that are used at the Court of Kumasi, which I wrote down, with his explanation of their meaning.

On the morning of the 4th we resumed our journey, and soon after starting observed with intense relief numerous signs that we were at last approaching the open country.

The vegetation began to assume quite new characters; fresh forms of insect life made their appearance, and numerous unfamiliar species of birds were seen. The slender,

stately forest trees with their straight trunks and horizontal arms, gave place at intervals to smaller trees with gnarled and twisted boughs that come off from the trunks comparatively low down, and having coarse, fissured barks—trees that bore a strong resemblance to our English fruit trees. Now and again the forest opened out into grassy expanses sparsely covered with these small trees (which were all leafless at this time), strongly reminding one of an English grass-orchard.

In some of the openings the grass was of enormous height, one stalk that I measured being seventeen feet, three inches high, and having a thick, jointed stem, broad leaves, and a brush-like inflorescence. There were in some places patches of a fine grass about a foot high, and in others a lofty species about ten feet high, very much like Guinea grass. There were also a few flowers, the most common being two species of pea, one with a bright blue blossom, and the other with a large purple flower, and various handsome convolvuli, and these were largely patronized by crowds of small black and white butterflies. It was evident that the capture of parrots formed one of the local industries, for several of the trees had rude ladders fastened to them, and platforms of sticks had been built on to the lower boughs. The end of this day's march brought us to the village of Tétcheri.

On the 5th we only marched four hours, halting at the large village of Tánno-su, one of the innumerable villages of that name that are dotted along the banks of the long

and important river Tánno (or Tano or Tando as it is variously spelt on the maps).

On the morning of the 6th, about a quarter of an hour after starting, we reached this river. It flowed in a westerly direction and was forty-five feet wide, deep, muddy, and sluggish.

The Tánno is a powerful and much venerated fetish, probably more so even than the Busum-Pra, and there are some very curious observances in connection with it. At this part the river is inhabited by two species of fish, one being a large-scaled species, about a foot long and not unlike a grayling in appearance, which swims about in large shoals; and the other being apparently a species of *Silurus*, a particularly hideous and monstrous-looking creature from three to four feet long, which swims about in shoals of four or five. These latter are the sacred or fetish fish and are regularly fed with hard-boiled eggs by the fetish men, at whose call the fish are said to assemble by the banks. As I approached the river the chief fetish man of the village was sitting close to the water's edge, and a group of these huge and repulsive-looking fishes hovered about a few feet away from him.

As I was about to cross the river (which was spanned by a fallen tree) the fetish man rose and accosted me. He explained that no person was permitted to carry a stick across the sacred river, as this would be regarded as an indignity to the fetish, and in confirmation of his statement he pointed to a great pile of staves that stood on the bank, to which he requested me to add my stick. Not being

disposed to part with my trusty oak staff in this casual manner, I ventured to argue the point, explaining that my stick was not a common staff cut by the way-side, but a really valued piece of personal property, in fact it was one of my fetishes; moreover, I urged, being a stranger to the country I could not be expected to be fully informed in the matter of local customs, and I was sure that the fetish would have too much good sense to take umbrage at any eccentricities on the part of a white man. After some wrangling, the fetish man agreed to take this view of the matter, but stipulated that I should drop a small quantity of gold dust into the river as I crossed, as an offering to the fetish, this being also a customary proceeding. To this I also demurred, on the grounds that I had my own particular fetish to consider, who might be inclined to view with disapproval any offerings made to other and foreign fetishes. This argument was conclusive, and the old wizard at once gave me a "free pass" and his benediction; but I observed that our men, even the Mahommedan Hausas, all left their sticks on the pile, and several of them opened little packets of gold dust and shook the contents into the river as they crossed.

The greater part of this day's march was through dense forest, although a few openings were crossed. The district appears to yield gold, for in the bed of one of the streams that we crossed, I observed a number of gold pits. After seven hours' marching we arrived at the town of Odomási, a place apparently of some importance. The name signifies "under the Odóm", which latter, I was informed by a native

of the place, is a tree of somewhat small size characterized by a poisonous bark, the properties of which are so deadly as to occasion the death of any rats that may happen to gnaw it. This bark does not appear to be used medicinally, but it furnishes a poison that is made use of as an ordeal in some native trials. The Odóm, (my informant stated) must not be confounded with the Odúm, a large hardwood tree a good deal resembling the Bombax in external appearance, which is common in the forest and gives its name (Odumási) to a number of towns and villages.[1]

As we were resting under the shade-tree, we observed that preparations were being made by the natives for a palaver, and presently to our unspeakable joy a man was seen approaching on a large pony. This was indeed a welcome sight, for it showed us that we had really reached the limits of the dense forest and had arrived in a country where there existed roads sufficiently good to allow of the use of beasts of burden. In former days, before the decline of the Ashanti kingdom, horses were to be found at Kumasi, a fact which shows that at that time the roads to the interior were very different from the overgrown tracks along which we had passed since leaving that town.

[1] In spite of the man's emphatic statement to the contrary I am inclined to think that this town was really named Odumási, since I observed a large Odúm tree in one of the streets; and I have heard of an ordeal poison being prepared from its bark.

It is significant too, of the estimation in which this beautiful tree is held, that one of the royal stools is made of Odúm. On this the king-elect (of Ashanti) is placed as a preliminary measure, his enthronement on the Gold Stool being the final stage in his appointment to his royal office.

The rider of this steed was a Mahommedan, of by no means prepossessing aspect, and his appearance was not improved by the fact that his mouth was crammed with kola, the orange-red juice of which covered his lips and stained his teeth. He was, however, extremely well dressed, and was evidently a man of no small importance to judge by his masterful swaggering manner and the deference with which he was treated by the natives of the place.

He walked his pony up to the place where we were sitting and then applied his large wicked-looking spurs with such vigour that the animal he bestrode curvetted and frisked about in the most extraordinary manner, nearly capsizing our table. He then rode up to us and shook our hands, after which he, with some difficulty, disengaged himself from the high-peaked Arab saddle and dismounted, when he again approached and shook hands, repeating the word "*Berika, berika*" (blessing) by way of a polite salute and benediction.

After this magnate came the King and his attendants in the usual form of procession, preceded by a company of drummers and attended by slaves carrying large umbrellas.

The King was not a native of the place, but appeared to be a kind of ambassador sent down by the King of Jáman to conduct certain palavers connected with the great Tánnosu fetish. Having saluted us, the party formed a semi-circle in front of us, in the centre of which our Mahommedan friend sat with great dignity, and solemnly masticated kola throughout the proceedings.

The political programme was then recited, and, as we

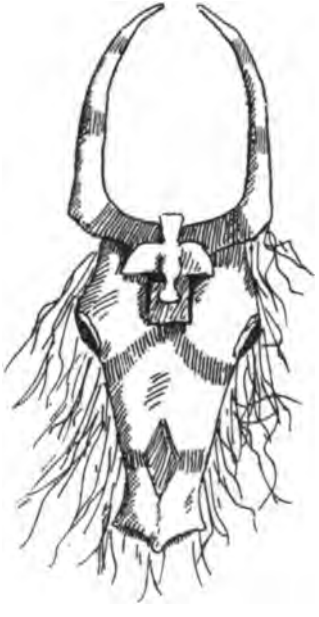
were quite in the dark ourselves as to what our movements were likely to be, our utterances were of the most guarded character. This ambiguity of speech and our general attitude of masterly inactivity did not appear to create a very favourable impression, for the King and chiefs retired rather abruptly with an air of disgust.

In the evening a grand fetish dance was held in honour of our visit, and was really one of the most remarkable spectacles that I ever witnessed in West Africa. The deity worshipper was the great inland fetish, Sakrobúndi, or Sakrobudi, whose "sphere of influence" appears to be very extensive, including Jáman, Gruinsi and several of the countries lying to the north.

I never met with any traces of the worship of this fetish in Ashanti, but in Jáman and the countries immediately to the north it was evidently held in great veneration.

I could obtain very little information about it, for the Jáman language was quite unintelligible to our people and we never were on a very cordial footing with the natives of the district; besides which African natives are as a rule extremely reticent on the subject of their religious beliefs, and if pressed for information usually deliberately mislead their questioners, and, moreover, their own ideas on religious subjects are commonly extremely vague and indefinite. It appeared, however, that the worship of Sakrobúndi had been introduced into Jáman from the north—possibly from Gruinsi, Moshi, or Dagomba—in comparatively recent times. A curious and constant feature in the worship is the use of

wooden masks by the fetishmen, of which the one used on this occasion was a typical example. They are generally of large size and either represent the head of an antelope with incurved horns as in this specimen and in the one which I found afterwards at Diadasu, or a more or less grotesque human face surmounted by the characteristic horns.

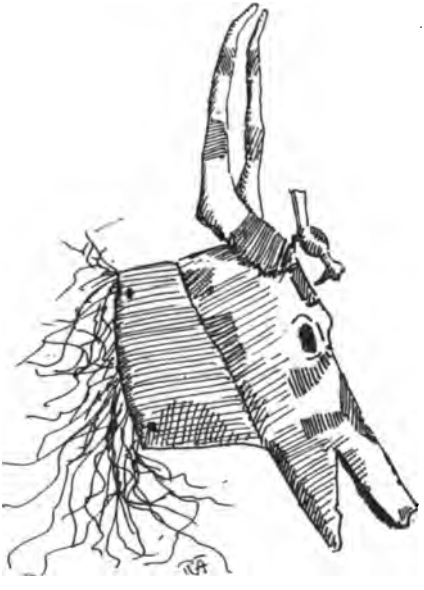


SAKROBUNDI MASK OF PAINTED WOOD REPRESENTING AN ANTELOPE'S HEAD, FROM DIADASU.

In all cases the incurved horns seem to be a characteristic feature in the masks, for even in the specimen from Jimini which is shown in the annexed photograph, and which was much more highly finished and artistically executed than any other that I saw, and was a perfectly recognisable representation of a native of Jimini, the ornamental appendage above the face will be seen to be a conventionalization of the horns similar to that in the second Diadasu mask, but carried further; and I may mention that there was no native head-dress which it could be supposed to represent. It would thus seem that the Sakrobúndi fetish is in some way connected with an antelope with incurved horns, which occurs in the district, and one of the horns of which I found in a fetish house, made into

a trumpet; and as some of the fetish houses had attached to them troops of sacred monkeys, it is probable that this is a form of the animal worship that is so common in different parts of West Africa.

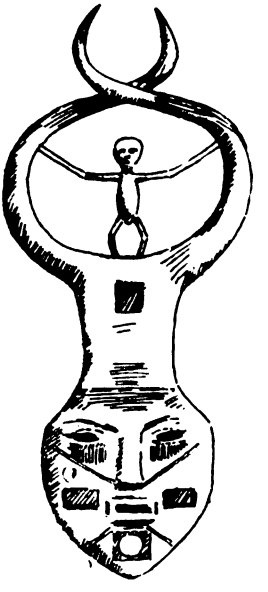
The dancers were, in this case, arranged in an incomplete circle, that is a circle with an interval, thus ◯, and slowly revolved round its centre. The curved line was formed half of males and half of females, and each of these divisions was "sized" in a regular gradation. First came the full-grown men, the elders taking precedence, next came the young men, then the youths and boys, and finally little fellows of three or four years: these were followed by women, the elder ones as before taking the first place, then the young matrons, girls, and children, and the rear was brought up by a number of little mites who could scarcely toddle.



THE SAME, PROFILE VIEW.

All these performers were duly attired for the occasion. Most of them wore kilts of a soft flexible fibre (unwoven), forming a long fringe, and all had plaited armlets of the same material, with a long brush-like tassel, just above the

elbows. They also wore, principally on the right leg, very curious anklets, formed by plaiting the broad grass of the plain, the design of which was very elegant and most skilfully carried out. The plaiting was so arranged as to produce a series of pyramidal projections somewhat like the Gothic "dog's-tooth ornament", and the cavities inside these projections each contained a small pebble or fragment of quartz that rattled as the anklet was shaken. Of these anklets, from one to half a dozen were worn by each dancer, who in addition, carried in the hand one of the brush like armlets, and during the dance stooped down and made a show of sweeping the ground with it.



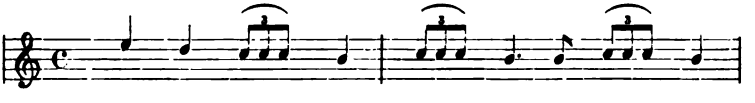
SAKROBUNDI MASK OF PAINTED WOOD, FROM DIADASU.

Several men were stationed in the interior of the circle and took an active, in fact I may say, agile part in the dance.

The centre of the circle was, however, occupied by the most remarkable figure of the group, the principal fetish man, and as I despair of giving an adequate idea of his appearance by mere description I reinforce my pen with the pencil and furnish a couple of sketches of him. He was enveloped from head to foot in a covering of the soft fibre of which the kilts were made, and to the front of this was attached a huge wooden

mask in the semblance of an antelope's head surmounted by a pair of curved horns. The mask was painted red and white, the horns being decorated with alternate rings of these colours to represent the annular projections which appear on the horns of the animal. On the forehead a grotesque face was painted, and above this there were two holes for the fetishman to look through. The dance itself was a strange and weird performance and altogether had quite an uncanny effect. All the dancers forming the circle maintained a stooping posture and chanted over and over again a short minor refrain, thus:

SAKROBUNDI MASK OF POLISHED BLACK WOOD, FROM JIMINI.



As they chanted they swept the ground with their brushes

and moved along by short side-long steps so that the circle slowly revolved round its centre. In all their movements they kept as perfect time as a company of highly drilled soldiers; the motions of their feet as they moved round and of their arms as they swept with their brushes, all occurred absolutely simultaneously, so that the effect was that of an immense machine. And as sixty or seventy feet came to the ground together, the anklets that surmounted them gave a simultaneous rattle, producing a sound somewhat like that which occurs when a breaker suddenly sweeps back from a steep, shingly beach, but much shorter and sharper; and at the end of each round of the chant the same number of pairs of hands came together with a simultaneous clap.

Meanwhile the men inside the circle leaped about, waving their long tassel-like brushes with the greatest animation and with no little grace of movement. Conspicuous among these was my friend Koffi Dabbi, whose athletic figure and remarkable activity enabled him to take a part in the performance that reflected credit upon the expedition.

The fetish man notwithstanding the somewhat ponderous nature of his "get up" was far from inactive, for he frisked and capered about with surprising agility, running to and fro inside the circle and occasionally kneeling on the ground in its centre and nodding his huge hideous mask in a manner quite horrible to witness.

Now and again he retired to an adjacent fetish house to perform some occult part of the ceremony (or perhaps to take

refreshment), whence he presently returned to renew his gambols. He was armed with a small switch with which he occasionally stimulated the devotion of his flock, and was attended by a species of acolyte who arranged his robe and adjusted his mask from time to time.

TASSELLED ARMLETS AND ANKLET WORN AT SAKROBUNDI DANCE.

The antics of this grotesque personage excited considerable mirth among his followers, but yet it was easy to see that he was regarded with no small awe, for whenever he approached the confines of the ring the dancers fell back with an expression of fear. The Fantis too, who accompanied us, shrank back whenever he approached them and were evidently uncomfortable in his close proximity, which indeed is not to be wondered at, for his appearance was most diabolical. As to our Hausas (who were Mahommedans), they hardly seemed to know

whether they ought to be amused or angry: their natural superstition made them feel somewhat uneasy, but, taking their cue from me, they preserved a friendly and amused demeanour.

The following day (7th January) we were nearly nine

SAKROBUNDI FETISH MAN: FULL FACE.

SAKROBUNDI FETISH MAN: PROFILE.

hours on the road, and a considerable part of the day's march was through open country. We were very glad to be out of the endless shade of the forest, but still it was undeniably more fatiguing marching in the burning sun through the long brown grass. The perspiration dripped from us continually, and the tall grass, which was high above our heads, scratched our hands and faces with the

sharp serrated edges of its coarse blades and showered down on us swarms of most objectionable and pugnacious ants as we pushed our way through it.

On this day for the first time on our journey we met with Agoa-beam palms (or fan-palms), a fact of considerable interest, as these palms are almost, if not quite unknown on the western part of the Gold Coast, but become extremely common a few miles east of Ketta (Quittah), increasing in number towards Bágida where they form the principal vegetation. In that district, roughly speaking, the lowland littoral country east of the Volta, the character of the land and the fauna and flora correspond very closely with the region through which we were now passing, and a glance at the map accompanying this volume will show that the two are probably continuous.

On the 8th and 9th our route lay through a district in which small extents of open orchard-like country alternated with larger expanses of dense forest. In the afternoon of the 9th we reached the large village of Faténta where, as the commissioner and a large number of the men were sick, we remained for two days.

The natives of these Jáman villages took the greatest interest in our proceedings, having never seen a white man before; and I noticed, at first with some surprise, that those of our actions that interested them most, were the simple and commonplace ones. At first I expected that they would give the most attention to such of our doings as would appear to them the most strange and unlike

their own; but it was not so. In any proceedings on my part which they could not understand, they displayed but a languid interest, whereas to such simple matters as eating and dressing they gave the closest and keenest attention.

Every morning when I emerged from my tent I found a large audience waiting patiently for the performance to begin, and when I took my place at the washstand a crowd (consisting in the larger villages of from one hundred to three hundred persons) closed round, forming a large circle. They followed the whole process with the greatest enjoyment, discussing and explaining to one another the various details, and now and again raising shouts of applause as some peculiarly amusing feature in the performance (such as the use of the nail-brush) occurred. When I produced my tooth-brush and proceeded to put it to its natural use, there was much anxious discussion, and when I brushed my hair up "the wrong way of the grain" and made it stand on end, they yelled with delight.

Being habitually almost entirely unclothed themselves they were naturally not afflicted by any severe scruples of delicacy, so that when I commenced to divest myself of my pyjamas and to take the somewhat perfunctory bath preparatory to assuming my ordinary day-clothing, there was no falling off in the crowd of spectators; in fact they seemed to regard this as the choicest part of the whole performance, and I could easily see from their excited gestures and vociferous conversation that they were settling once for all the momentous question whether I was really

white all over or whether only my hands and face presented that absurd abnormality.

Their curiosity on this point was much resented by the Hausas, who, as good Mussulmans, were greatly scandalized by such an absence of modesty, and they used to surround me, some of them holding up cloths to screen me from the gaze of the vulgar, while others "shoo-ed" at the crowd of natives as though they were a pack of fowls. Their efforts, however, had little effect, for although the scared natives would scamper away for a short distance they very soon returned, curiosity getting the better of fear, and some of them lay down on the ground trying to look under the cloths, while others stood on tip-toe and peered over the screens, craning their necks to get a glimpse of the human monstrosity behind.

Our meals afforded as much satisfaction to the natives as they did to ourselves. Our attendants, as they brought the food from the camp fire, were surrounded by jabbering crowds who pored over the dishes they carried, with infinite wonder, and as soon as we took our seats at the table the crowd assembled and formed a large semi-circle in front of us, the front rows seated on the ground, or on wooden stools which they brought from their houses, and the outer circle standing.

Every stage in the process was watched closely, and freely commented on with much pointing, argument and discussion. When the cork was drawn from the commissioner's whiskey bottle there was a general murmur of applause and a chorus of astonished "Ow's", while the

spectacle of the white man impaling portions of his food on the four-pointed weapon that he wielded with his left hand, afforded boundless joy. As for the opening of a bottle of champagne (which occurred on one occasion after an unusually long march) it simply "brought down the house", although the audience somewhat abruptly dispersed and viewed the remainder of the performance round the corners of adjacent huts. The commonplace details of our everyday life these simple folk never tired of witnessing, but, as I have already observed, when anything was done that they did not understand, their interest was not stimulated.

When I sat down to make a sketch I had but few spectators, not so many as I should probably have had in an English village; when I set up my theodolite to take an altitude of the sun little notice was taken of my proceedings; but when our attendants began to prepare the table for a meal the spectators poured in and began to take their seats in readiness for the spectacle.

While we were encamped at Fatênta I took the opportunity of obtaining several native litters in which to carry our sick. We had hitherto been carrying them in rude hammocks formed by tying the ends of a native cloth to the bough of a tree, an arrangement that was not very comfortable either for the patient or the bearers, and these native litters were much better suited for rough travelling. They consisted simply of narrow troughs of stout wicker work, and were carried on the heads of two men.

I made a tour round the outskirts of Fatênta in one by

way of experiment, and although it looked rather unsafe it was more comfortable than the ordinary hammock. My progress in this native conveyance caused great amusement among our followers and the people of the village, who surrounded me in a large crowd, cheering lustily. Litters of this kind are used by the native kings and chiefs, but in their case the wicker framework is generally covered with leopard or lion skin, and trappings of bright-coloured cloth are added to increase the splendour of its appearance, while increased stability and security are attained by fixing poles along the sides to rest on the shoulders of the carriers. When thus carried the King or chief can look over the heads of his followers and can be seen by all of them, in which respect also it is superior to the hammocks used by Europeans, the rider in which is quite invisible and can only obtain a very restricted view of his surroundings.

During our stay at Fatênta we received a visit from the driver ants, whose acquaintance we had already made on the road, for scarcely a day passed in which we did not encounter their columns crossing the narrow track. When undisturbed one of these columns presents the appearance of a black glistening band crossing the path (always at right angles to its length); its breadth is from three to six inches, and its thickness or height nearly an inch, for the insects walk over one another as they pass to and fro, forming a heaped-up mass so dense and coherent that on several occasions, on passing a stick quickly under the column, I have been able to raise the entire mass from the

ground like a rope. The bulk of the individuals in such a column is formed by the ordinary workers, strong, active insects about three-quarters of an inch long, of a glossy black, with large heads armed with powerful jaws; but scattered at intervals along the edges of the column are a number of larger individuals with much larger heads, and mandibles of such a formidable size as to give them the appearance of small stag-beetles.

These latter are the soldiers or foremen of works. They do not, as I have said, mingle with the common herd, but with military exclusiveness, stand aloof, keeping guard and superintending the movements of the rabble. They are extremely pugnacious and aggressive, and their bite is a thing to be avoided, for when I presented to them small sticks or twigs they rushed at them in the most vicious manner, and when they had once taken hold would allow themselves to be pulled in halves before they would let go. These columns of ants do not cause any inconvenience to solitary travellers or small parties who can simply step over them and pass on unmolested, but to our long line of carriers they were a great annoyance, for by the time the advance guard had walked over them and spread them out, they covered the path for several yards and it was impossible to escape them. They crawled up our legs and swarmed over our bodies in hundreds, and as soon as we had fairly passed their line of march we generally called a halt, and those of us who wore clothes proceeded forthwith to partially remove them and spend a few minutes in

picking the intruders off our persons. As soon as they reached the bare skin they generally buried their jaws in it, and when we picked off their bodies the heads remained sticking in the skin and had to be subsequently removed. Their bites did not appear to be poisonous and only occasioned a temporary irritation.

Their visit to us at Fatênta was a much more serious affair, and had it occurred during the night might have been a source of real danger to us. We were just finishing dinner on the second evening of our stay at that village when Joe appeared with a lantern, and taking his stand opposite me, regarded me with an imbecile grin. This was Joseph's usual method of making known to me that something remarkable had occurred.

"Well, Joe," I enquired, "what's the matter now?" But Joe simply stood and grinned, occasionally emitting a gurgling chuckle. At this moment the Commissioner's servant, a tall, lanky Fanti named John, who by reason of his age, and his gravity of manner, was much looked up to by our men, appeared on the scene, also armed with a lantern, and announced in solemn tones that "the hasses come." Somewhat staggered by this piece of information we rose from the table and followed John and the sniggering Joseph in the direction of the tents, wondering what could have happened. A few yards from the nearest tent John halted and threw the light of his lantern on the ground, and then a truly wonderful sight presented itself. The surface of the earth was completely hidden by a black

glittering mass of ants moving steadily in one direction, a veritable river of insects many yards in width and of a length that could not be ascertained. Out of this moving stream our tents rose like islands, from which we were hopelessly cut off for the present. After watching this singular spectacle for some time we returned to the table and whiled away the time in conversation until it should be possible to retire to our tents, making occasional pilgrimages in the direction of the latter only to find the stream of ants sweeping steadily on in undiminished volume. This state of things continued for upwards of two hours, and we were just beginning to wonder whether we were to be excluded from our tents for the whole of the night, when the advancing column was observed to be getting slightly thinner and narrower, and very soon it began to rapidly diminish.

As soon as it was possible to get near my tent, I cautiously approached and peered in to ascertain what had been going on in my absence and how I should have fared if I had been in bed at the time of the invasion. The floor was still covered with a densely packed mass of ants moving steadily and rapidly forward, but none of the insects appeared to have ascended any of the furniture or climbed on to the baggage. Not a single ant was to be seen on the bed, and the crowds that passed underneath it made no attempt to walk up the legs. On each of the latter, however, a few inches from the ground, a soldier ant was stationed, and similar individuals were posted at other fixed points, apparently directing the movements of the workers.

In about three hours from the time when we first observed the army the last stragglers passed through the camp and we were once more left in possession; but before turning in we took the precaution to form round each of the tents a ring of the fresh ashes from the camp fires. It is said that ants will not cross a line of wood ashes, and although I never had an opportunity of testing the truth of this statement, I should think it is probably correct, as the large proportion of carbonate of potash which wood ashes contain would render them extremely irritating if not actually poisonous to insects; and it has been proved by good observers that ants are extremely sensitive to the action of irritating mineral poisons, such as corrosive sublimate, contact with which salt appears to produce in them a species of frenzy in which they become affected with formicidal mania and "run amuck", falling on and destroying one another quite indiscriminately.

At daybreak on the 12th we marched out of Fatênta, and almost immediately after leaving the village the road, to our great disappointment, plunged into dense forest, and through this, excepting when we crossed an occasional grassy opening of quite small extent, we marched until near sunset. The forest at this point was, however, somewhat different from that further south. Although dense, lofty and umbrageous, there was an absence of those immense patriarchal trees that formed the bulk of the forest in the central region, and most of the trees of the silk-cotton order were quite young.

It appeared to me that the forest was extending in a northerly direction, for not only were the trees, as I have said, mostly young, but for several days at increasingly frequent intervals, we had crossed patches of woodland covered with the small contorted trees characteristic of the country north of the forest, thickly interspersed with young members of the silk-cotton tribe.

In the tract through which we passed on this day, rubber-bearing plants were very numerous. They occurred in the form of a large creeper (*Landolphia*) and a medium-sized, lofty, slender tree with a white bark, of which the forest was in some places almost entirely composed, and which furnished, according to some of our carriers, a rubber of excellent quality.

The appearance of Nyami (the village at which we halted for the night) was somewhat different from that of the villages we had hitherto encountered, for the houses were enclosed by four walls and were built of a yellowish clay in place of the bright red material of which houses are built in Ashanti.

On the following day (13th), about an hour and a half after starting, we met with a large opening in the forest (which was now a good deal thinner) covered with grass about three feet high. In many places large tracts of the iron rock were laid bare, and its rough surface rendered quite hot by the sun, was most unpleasant to walk upon.

The path, where it did not pass over the bare rock, was composed of loose fragments like clinkers, and this was hardly more pleasant to the feet than the hot jagged rock.

As we crossed the opening a range of hills (the name

of which I ascertained to be Bafa) appeared two or three miles to our left: its direction appeared to be North by East, and in no part did it exceed 1,000 feet in height. After passing through a belt of wood, we again emerged into the open—having breakfasted meanwhile at the village of Juanun—and crossed a plain sparsely covered with grass, large patches of which had been burned, exposing the soil. This consisted mostly of the loose fragments spoken of above, but here and there were tracts covered with a black mould, and in these places, and in these alone, worm-casts were seen. We halted for the night at the village of Boyasu which is situated just on the borders of the plain and from which the Bafa hills are visible. We had during the day passed through several villages all very neat, clean and apparently prosperous, surrounded by little plantations of tobacco neatly fenced in and evidently carefully cultivated and tended. Boyasu was similar in character to these, and its houses were finished with appendages that I had never before seen in native dwellings, viz., fireplaces, small lean-to structures placed against the ends of the houses and probably used as a species of bake-house. They were, of course, outside the houses.

On the 14th we marched almost entirely through the open, and we now began to congratulate ourselves on having really seen the last of the dense forest, although we crossed one or two belts of thickish wood in which the flora was of the forest type. The coarse, rocky surface over which we had hitherto travelled now began to give place

to a soft, yellowish-grey loam, apparently of considerable depth, to judge by the appearance of the trees, the roots of which were entirely buried. And coincidentally with these changes in the natural features of the country, there was to be observed an alteration in the condition of the

A JAMAN VILLAGE.

inhabitants. Villages appeared at more frequent intervals, and several considerable plantations of yams and tobacco were passed, the earth being in each case formed into conical heaps about eighteen inches high, disposed in regular rows. About an hour after starting we passed through the somewhat considerable village of Adámasu, and soon after through a pleasant prosperous-looking village

called Morda-ine, which was distinguished by a flagstaff from which fluttered a towel-like native cloth. This had evidently been raised by some adventurous spirit who had visited the British settlements on the coast, in the same way that retired mariners in England are accustomed to raise a flagstaff in their gardens.

This structure was in many ways quite a work of art: it was reared upon a broad base of clay, and a large serpent admirably modelled in the same material, was coiled round the foot of the mast, which was surmounted by a tortoise carved in wood, and a large shell.

On the 15th we struck our camp (at the village of Máttin) about 7.30 a.m., and after a little over three hours' marching reached the town of Soku. About half way we halted for a few minutes at a small village which presented some new features and was eminently characteristic of the district we were now entering. Several of the houses were circular in plan with conical extinguisher-like roofs of grass thatch. Their walls were extremely smooth and well finished, and were painted red and black in broad alternating vertical stripes. Everything in this village seemed indicative of order and prosperity, and the cleanly, tidy, and generally well-to-do air of the place contrasted strongly with the dirty and slovenly appearance of the villages in the British Protectorate.

Even the dogs were cleaner and better cared for: one of them was actually decorated with an elaborately worked collar from which was suspended a bell, and with these personal adornments he trotted about the village, at his

master's heels, with an air of bumptiousness and self-sufficiency very different from the abject demeanour of the wretched tick-bitten pariahs of the coast towns.

The country between Máttin and Soku was orchard-like in character, and the surface chiefly composed of the yellowish loam. A few masses of quartz were seen and one or two bosses of a fine-grained, grey granite, as well as an occasional out-crop of a hard non-ferruginous sandstone.

The red ferruginous stone cropped out in one or two places, and I noticed that in the soil derived from it there were no worm-casts, although the surface of the yellow loam was pretty thickly covered with them. We passed a number of plots of cultivated land like those above described, and in addition several plantations of a kind of pea, the fruit of which resembled that of the green pea. The plants, however, instead of being creepers, were little trees from five to eight feet in height, and each was planted on a conical heap of earth. Mixed with the peas was a small quantity of cassava.

Agoa-beam palms were now quite plentiful, and near Soku I saw a number of a dwarf species of date palm loaded with fruit, bright scarlet in colour, about half an inch long, dry and insipid in taste. In spite of their mawkish flavour these little dates are eaten by the not very fastidious natives, as is also the equally insipid, though tempting-looking fruit of the Agoa-beam palm, the gelatinous pulp of which when boiled with water likewise furnishes a drink that is much in vogue in the district.

CHAPTER VI

SOKU

SOKU—Sacred Monkeys—Safeguards against Witchcraft—Odonkor as a Marksman—A Native Brewery—Unfriendly attitude of the people of Soku—Rumours—The Market—Commerce of the District—Shea Butter—More Rumours—Large Baobab—A Visit from Diawúsi—Drunkenness in Africa—Political Entanglements—Our Policy.

THE town of Soku or Soko is one of the more considerable towns of Jáman and is distant only a mile or two from the capital, Bontúku, from which it is separated by a narrow belt of thin forest.

Its houses are built mostly of a black, apparently organic, clay, and the majority are oblong structures having four walls, and a single opening which serves for door and window. Some of the houses are, however, circular in plan, like those of the neighbouring country of Gwanjiowa; but they are not entirely similar to the latter, for their doorways are of the full height of a man, and their floors of stamped earth; whereas in Gwanjiowa the doorways are only three or four feet high, and the floors are formed of a hard smooth material composed of cow-dung dried and compressed.

The appearance of Soku did not strike me as inviting. There was a general air of griminess about the place, and the streets were decidedly malodorous as is apt to be the case in the larger African towns, for the simple sanitary arrangements which work so well in small villages are less satisfactory when applied to larger aggregations of human beings; moreover, the responsibility for the cleanliness and general condition of the towns being rather more diffused than in the villages, they do not get so well looked after.

Our tents were pitched on the outskirts of the town, in a large open space, at one end of which was a small grove clustered round a large silk-cotton tree. This grove was the retreat of a community of large brown monkeys who were dedicated to the Sakrobúndi fetish, and a small fetish house stood at the foot of the cotton tree. The monkeys seemed quite aware of their official position with its resulting security from molestation, for they were extremely self-possessed and not in the least shy of human beings; in fact their familiarity made them rather a nuisance, for not only would they sit round the table watching us when we took our meals under the shade-tree, but they amused themselves by hauling on the tent ropes, to our great annoyance, and sometimes even ventured to inspect the interior of the tents during our absence.

In the evening of our arrival at Soku, while making a tour of inspection of the town, I noticed in several of the streets piles of large stones placed against walls, the interstices of the stones being filled with hair, evidently human.

I applied to a native of the place who spoke Ochi for an explanation of the curious arrangement, and he informed me that it was, as I had surmised, connected with the religious beliefs of the district. When any native of the place, he explained, cut his hair, he carefully gathered up the cuttings and carried them to one of these cairns, where he deposited them, placing on top of them one of the stones, which being the property of the fetish could not be removed. He went on to point out the necessity for this observance. The cairns of sacred stones were simply a precaution against witchcraft, for if a man were not thus careful in disposing of his hair some of it might come into the possession of his enemies, who would, by means of it, be enabled to cast spells over him and thus compass his destruction. I could not discover whether similar precautions were taken in regard to the clipping of the nails, as is the case in some adjacent districts.

We determined to remain encamped at Soku until we should receive permission from the king to proceed to Bontúku, and as it was six days before this occurred we had ample time to rest before completing our journey.

On the morning after our arrival Odonkor gave us a specimen of his skill as a marksman which was really remarkable. Each of the three European officers was provided with a Swinburne rifle, and these weapons Odonkor, who was an enthusiastic sportsman, occasionally borrowed. Having observed that he was evidently unacquainted with the use of the sliding back-sight, we were a little sceptical as to

his ability to use the rifle at all, and made some remark to that effect, whereupon he volunteered to demonstrate to us the excellence of his aim. Now, in the vicinity of the camp there were two or three large isolated silk-cotton trees upon which in the morning and towards night immense numbers of hawks perched, so that the trees looked as though they were covered with some large kind of fruit. Although not nearly so lofty as those in the forest, they were of considerable size, and on measuring one with the sextant, I found it to be a hundred and sixty-five feet high. On this tree Odonkor asked us to select a hawk and point it out to him, which we did, selecting a bird perched on one of the branches close to the summit. Our sportsman then took aim and fired, and the bird at once fell dead on to the ground. The demonstration was conclusive, but we were greatly puzzled to account for such accuracy when Odonkor assured us that he made no use of the sights, which he did not understand. We were all fairly good rifle shots, but we should have had very little chance of coming off as triumphantly as our sporting interpreter.

In the course of the morning, while wandering about the town, I encountered a native brewery, a very primitive affair, where the beer called here *Pittu* was made. This beer, or rather wort, is made thus:—A quantity of maize mixed with a certain proportion of Guinea corn is soaked in water and kept moist until it germinates; it is then dried, pounded, and subsequently boiled in water in large pots. During the boiling the scum is removed and afterwards mixed

with the boiled malt in a basket which is stood over a large jar. Over this mixture water is poured and percolates into the jar, from which it is removed to another larger jar where it remains until it has fermented, when, without further preparation, it is considered ready for consumption.

I purchased some of this fluid, and having tasted it and found it abominable, made Joe a present of a large jar full, upon which he called in his friends and they held a carouse, and strange to say, seemed none the worse for it.

While writing in my tent in the afternoon my ears were saluted by a series of shouts proceeding from the Major's tent a few yards off, and on coming out to discover the cause of his excitement, I observed three carriers with a small Hausa escort approaching. One of the soldiers belonging to the escort I recognised, an old lance-corporal named Belliko Fuláni, and I knew he had not come up with us, so I surmised that these carriers were bringing us mails and additional stores, which proved to be the case, and presently we enjoyed for the first time since leaving the Coast, the luxury of letters and newspapers.

We had not been long in Soku before we discovered that we were far from welcome visitors. It had happened at many of the villages on the route that the reception accorded to us was by no means enthusiastic; but there was an obvious reason for this. Our little army entering a small village required an amount of provisions that would have lasted the inhabitants for weeks, and although there were strict orders against looting, of course the men had

to get food, and they did get it, very often, I am afraid, without paying for it. In any case the hamlet was cleared out after our visit, and the natives must have suffered great inconvenience in consequence.

The unfriendly attitude adopted towards us by the natives of Soku could not be accounted for in this way, for there was a large market to which the people from the surrounding hamlets brought their produce, and our presence merely created an opportunity for profitable barter.

Nevertheless on our arrival we were met by a prompt refusal on the part of the chief to supply us with provisions, and he was only induced to alter his decision by a hint from us that if we could not buy we should help ourselves. As time went on little reports began to filter into the camp which showed us that all was not well in the royal domain of Jáman, and led us to suspect that we had been brought upon the scene to act as a cat's-paw to some enterprising native politician, and this subsequently turned out to be the case. It appeared that a dispute had arisen between the king's son Diawúsi and certain of the principal chiefs of the kingdom, and that the latter faction, headed by a powerful and aged chief, Papi by name, being in the ascendant, had expelled the prince from the town of Mo, over which he had reigned.[1] Diawúsi and his followers were, at the time of our visit, at Bontúku, endeavouring to prevail

[1] In these countries of West Africa a system analogous to the feudal system prevails, by which every chief reigns over a town, village, or district, the size and importance of which is proportional to his rank.

on King Ajiman to reinstate him, and as Koffi Dabbi (our guide) was extremely friendly to the prince there can be little doubt that it was at the instigation of the latter that he came to Cape Coast to induce the white men to visit his country. The chief of Soku was one of Papi's stoutest adherents, and this accounted for his hostility to us.

The market at Soku was held (I think) on every fourth day, so that I had an opportunity of being present on one of these occasions. The people assembled in a large open space just outside the town, where the booths, if I may dignify them by that name, were set up in rows with a broad space between. The greater proportion of the vendors were Wongára women from Bontúku; they were seated either on mats or on small stools, and the goods were exposed in large baskets or in small sacks of plaited grass. In many cases the sacks were stood up on end and basket-work trays placed on the open mouths, and on these the smaller wares were laid out in little lots of a certain stated value. The Wongára women were easily distinguished from the women of Jáman, not only by their characteristic physiognomy, but by their remarkable head-dress, their more elaborate costume and their more cleanly, well-to-do and generally civilized appearance. The head-dress was quite peculiar and unlike anything I have seen elsewhere. The hair was gathered up into three globular masses somewhat like chignons, one of which occupied the top of the head just over the forehead, while one was placed on each temple, so that a Wongára woman had somewhat the appear-

ance of a clown. There were commonly two stiff plaits hanging down, one in front of each ear, and from the extremities of these strings of bright-coloured beads were suspended. In some cases too the ears were pierced and similar strings of beads passed through them. The dress consisted of a single cloth of the shape and size of a large bath-towel, which was wound round the body just below the breasts and reached down somewhat below the knee, forming a sort of short gown. These cloths, woven from the wild cotton, were thick, strong and soft in texture, and were dyed with indigo in stripes of varying depth. The produce that I saw exposed for sale on the stalls consisted of the following articles.

Shea butter (a white solid oil obtained from the fruit of *Bassia Parku*) in balls about two inches in diameter.

Balls of a black substance with a disgusting odour, produced by pounding the bean-like seeds of the Baobab or monkey-bread tree, which is plentiful in the locality. This tree, a specimen of which I shall presently have occasion to describe, bears a fruit of an oval or fusiform shape about nine or ten inches long, which hangs from the branch by a long, slender, cord-like stem. It has a hard woody shell covered with velvet-like epidermis of a delicate yellowish-green colour. On opening the pod (by breaking the shell) it is seen to contain a large number of dark-brown kidney-shaped seeds about half an inch in length, which are excessively hard, embedded in a white pith or dried pulp in which are numerous stringy fibres.

This pith, which is eaten by the natives and is presumably the "monkey-bread" from which the tree derives its name, contains a large proportion of a free vegetable acid. If soaked in water for an hour or so it becomes a soft paste, from which an agreeable acid drink can be prepared by putting a small quantity in a tumbler of water and "swizzling" it with a branched stick, when the pulp dissolves to a great extent, the seeds remain at the bottom and the fibres collect on the "swizzle-stick." The pounded seeds are used in the preparation of one of the many soups which are so prominent a feature in the culinary productions of the district.

Rice similar in appearance to Indian rice, but red in colour and sold in the husk.

Maize flour or meal of very good quality.

A small white bean very similar in appearance to the French bean, the seed of an arborescent shrub.

A fine meal made by pounding the said beans in wooden mortars.

Small pancakes made of mixed bean and corn meal fried or boiled in Shea butter.

Dried okros.

Pumpkin seeds. (These are made into soup or simply roasted and eaten dry.)

The leaves of some plant having a strong garlic-like odour, rolled into discs and strung upon strings of grass.

Sea-salt from Labáddi, Addá and other places on the Coast, in crystals, some loose and some in little finger-

shaped baskets 3¼ inches long and ¾ inch wide, said to contain the value of five cowries (about $\frac{1}{16}$ of a penny).

Salt is one of the greatest luxuries and delicacies known to the inland peoples of West Africa, the craving for it which they exhibit being probably due to the very large proportion of fruit and vegetables in their diet. As I stood watching the market people I saw several children visit the salt stalls, and having purchased a few crystals, saunter away sucking them as children at home would suck sweetmeats.

In addition to the articles that I have mentioned there were a few European articles for sale, fish-hooks and small fragments of looking-glass being the goods most in request. There were a few stalls on which native cloths were sold; but I did not see any European cotton goods exposed for sale, which is not a matter for surprise seeing that the native cotton cloths are greatly superior to those made in Europe, and are sold at very moderate prices.

From the above description it will be evident that the market of Soku, although it furnished an excellent supply of the necessaries of life for local consumption, did not exhibit any produce that could be utilized for exportation; and although it made evident a certain standard of comfort and well-being among the natives of the district and a considerable amount of social organization, it held out no great promise to the European commercial adventurer.

Somewhat more hopeful from the latter standpoint was the account given by a Wongára merchant from Kantámpo,

whom I met in the market, of the country around Kong. In that district, he informed me, were many large towns of considerable commercial importance, and there also gold was very plentiful; in fact, he assured me, in some places, masses of gold three feet high projected from the ground. I ventured to express surprise that these masses had not been removed; upon which he explained that they were "fetish", and were protected by guardian spirits, and that if any person attempted to remove them, he immediately became blind, although he recovered his sight upon desisting from such unlawful action.

My friend also gave me a good deal of information concerning the commerce of the district and the trade routes to the interior. Of these latter the two principal trunks pass through Bontúku and Salaga and meet at Kantámpo. The western or Bontúku road connects Kantámpo with Timbúktu (or Túmbutu), passing through Kong and Júlasu, while the eastern or Salaga road connects it with Kano, Sókoto, and the Hausa states, passing through Yendi. Kantámpo itself is in communication with Kumasi, of which it originally formed the market town, and these great trade roads owe their existence to the Ashanti kingdom, which, in the days of its power, attracted the commerce of the greater part of Northern and Central Africa.

The principal export from Ashanti, and indeed the article which has made and keeps alive the commerce of this part of Africa, is the kola nut, which is so highly prized by the people of Northern Africa that caravans journey to

Ashanti even from the shores of the Mediterranean to obtain it.

The imports appear to consist mainly of manufactured articles, leather work, woven fabrics, weapons and other metal work.

On my return to the camp I met an old woman who had some Shea butter for sale, and as I wished to examine this substance, I entered into negotiations for the purchase of some. I explained to the old dame that being a stranger I had no cowries and offered her two sixpences for a calabashful of the Shea tulu, which she accepted. When my orderly had paid her, however, she observed some shillings in his hand, two of which she picked out and returned the sixpences, remarking that "she preferred the large ones," and we had the greatest difficulty in making her understand the difference in their value, for a large cowry is, of course, of no more value than a small one, and she, not unnaturally, argued in the same way about coins.

The Shea butter turned out to be a hideous delusion. I had read in Mungo Park's travels that this vegetable fat when spread upon bread was a great delicacy, being equal in flavour to the finest cow butter. I tried the experiment, and from personal experience can recommend Shea butter as a prompt and active emetic. I think that cows must have greatly improved, or Shea butter greatly degenerated since Mungo Park's days, unless that redoubtable explorer was a person of very singular gastronomic tastes. Nevertheless, although not a success as an esculent, at least in

its raw state, this substance has properties that might make it of considerable economic value if it could be obtained in sufficient quantities. It is a white solid oil having an agreeable vegetable odour; it apparently remains good and unchanged for an indefinite period and has a very high melting point. It is used extensively in this district for culinary purposes, and rude candles are made by squeezing a mass of it round a loose cotton wick. It is also burnt in copper lamps of the pattern shown in the figure on page 373.

Shortly after we had taken our places at the dinner table Odonkor made his appearance with a very long face and informed us that he had some bad news to communicate. He had grave doubts as to whether our mission would not turn out a failure. On our pressing him for details he told us that he had been making enquiries in the town and had learned that a Frenchman had been staying at Bontúku and had induced King Ajiman to accept a French flag. He had even heard that a treaty had been signed.

This was very bad hearing for all of us and afforded abundant and unpleasant material for discussion during the remainder of our meal. In the evening I endeavoured to raise my drooping spirits by observing an occultation with a view of fixing the longitude; but the occultation was a failure too, so I concluded the entertainment by acting as showman and exhibiting the moon through my telescope to some of our domestics. They were all much astonished and delighted with the spectacle, and Joe was convulsed

with laughter, while the grave and patriarchal John, after gazing in speechless admiration for some minutes, sighed, shook his head, and remarked that it was "very fine and large."

On the following day (19th January) more information was forthcoming. It was said that two French officers were then staying with Papi, that king Ajiman had accepted a French flag and that a treaty had actually been signed. We learned also that the French officers had visited the neighbouring city of Kong, a city that had never before been visited by a European. This latter piece of information was particularly annoying to me as I had written to Sir Brandford Griffith, the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, asking for permission to ascertain the position of the Kong mountains, and had received by the messengers who brought our mails to Soku a peremptory order not to proceed beyond Bontúku. I had been extremely anxious to examine these mountains which appear so conspicuously on all the maps of Africa (but which I am now convinced do not exist at all), partly because no European had ever seen them, and partly because I then supposed them to furnish the head waters of the great river Volta. I was also very desirous of visiting the city of Kong which I had always understood to be one of the first-rate cities of the interior of Africa. It was therefore peculiarly tantalizing to know that, although within a few miles of this great centre of African industry, commerce and civilization, I was not only debarred from the privilege of visiting it,

but was compelled to look on while officers of a foreign Power explored it and established a claim on behalf of their Government to a protectorate over it.

In the immediate vicinity of Soku was the largest Baobab tree that I have ever seen, although not the largest that has been recorded, and on this day I took the opportunity of roughly measuring it. It was a magnificent specimen and a very typical example of the species *(Adansonia digitata)*. Its enormous trunk was covered with a smooth grey bark somewhat similar to that of the beech, but lighter and rather warmer in colour: the branches were extremely small and few in number in proportion to the enormous trunk, as is always the case with these trees—a character to which they owe in a large measure their strange uncanny appearance—and were quite bare of leaves, but plentifully decorated with the curious oval fruit which dangled at the ends of their long cord-like stalks. The roots meandered over the surface of the ground to an astonishing distance from the tree, one which I followed extending to a point thirty yards distant from the butt; and on measuring the trunk of the tree with a land tape, I found it to be between eighty and ninety feet in circumference at a height of four feet from the ground. This is an immense size even for a Baobab, but I believe some specimens have been recorded over a hundred feet in girth.

The wood of the Baobab is quite soft and pithy and is economically useless, a fact which is much to be regretted,

for if the timber had been of a usable kind this tree would have been indeed a valuable product.

In the evening I made several observations on fixed stars, and by averaging them determined the latitude of Soku to be 8° 1′ 43″ N.

On the 21st the news reached us that the king was in Bontúku, and the following day was fixed for our entry into that town.

In the forenoon we received a visit from Diawúsi and his followers, who poured into Soku in considerable numbers to our great annoyance, for seeing how very doubtful was our position in Jáman we had no wish to be mixed up with any of the local "palavers." However, as Diawúsi had arrived we considered it politic to be as friendly and conciliatory in our manner as was possible without compromising ourselves, so we gave him a fairly cordial reception. This prince was one of the most singular-looking natives that I ever met. His complexion was yellow like that of a Spaniard, but somewhat redder, and his features were like those of a mulatto rather than a pure negro, although his nostrils were large and the *alae* of the nose wide and rather high. His hair too was quite of the negro type, crisp, woolly and black, but he had what is most rare among pure negroes, a full thick beard and a well-developed moustache. In the majority of negroes these appendages are entirely absent in early adult life—and Diawúsi did not look more than thirty—and when they make their appearance the moustache consists of a few

straggling hairs, while the beard is usually confined to the chin, forming a forked "goatee."

But if Diawúsi's appearance was uncommon it was certainly not prepossessing. I really know nothing against the man's character, but a more sinister-looking face I never saw. Whatever doubts we had had about the advisability of throwing in our lot with him were at once dispelled when we beheld his physiognomy, and we received his marked advances with the most cautious reserve. His dress was not less curious than his person. Although a pagan he wore a blue embroidered tobe, such as is worn by the better-class Mahommedans, but, unlike the latter, his head was bare. When he approached to take my hand I noticed an immense protuberance in the region of his stomach and I at first supposed him to be the subject of some abdominal swelling, but I presently discovered that this projection was due to a huge bundle of saffis or charms which hung round his neck and collected in a great bunch over his stomach.

It was evident that he had been in communication with the French officers, for he carried with him, and ostentatiously displayed, the presents he had received from them; and we could not fail to notice that they were of more value and much more judiciously chosen than those with which we were provided. Among them were several gaudily-painted iron trunks—articles of no small value in this country where carpenters are few and white ants abound—and some double-barrelled guns of a showy pattern with profusely-ornamented

stocks, one of which Diawúsi carried about with him like a child with a new toy. The presents that we had brought with us were poor and ill-chosen: a few cheap folding chairs, much inferior to those made in the country, some gaudy cotton sunshades, a quantity of cotton cloths, quite valueless, for the cotton woven in the district was much superior and its superiority was fully appreciated by the natives, and a quantity of gin. The gin was, I think, the greatest mistake of all. In the first place the principle of introducing spirits is manifestly bad, and in the second, I do not believe it was valued by the natives, for whenever we offered any of this beverage to native chiefs I noticed that its consumption was accompanied by much grimacing, and was followed by profuse expectoration; and the worst of it was that native etiquette required us to drink first before filling the glasses of our guests, and I shudder at the recollection of that gin. My firm belief is that "fire-water" is one of the many popular delusions in regard to West Africa. In all my experience of the country (which extended from 1887 to 1891) I can recall only one case of genuine habitual drunkenness; and my friend Mr. Commissioner (now Judge) Rayner assured me that during the twelve months that he acted as police magistrate at Cape Coast he had not a single case of drunkenness brought before him. Of course among well-to-do native merchants there is a considerable consumption of strong sweet wines and especially cheap liqueurs; but as to trade gin and rum, I do not believe the natives really like it or have any craving for stimulants, and when

in the "bursts" that accompany native festivities, these fluids are drunk, the feeling is the same as that which impels schoo'-boys to smoke cigars or pieces of cane, not because they enjoy doing so, but because they then feel that they are "going it."

Our palaver with Diawúsi was not productive of any very satisfactory results, but it became more and more evident to us that our Government had been very neatly "done."

It was clear that Diawúsi, having looked around in vain for allies of sufficient strength to support him, had hit upon the ingenious expedient of sending a messenger to Cape Coast to invite the white men, in the name of the king, to visit the country.

As this conviction dawned upon us, the extreme awkwardness of our position became apparent, for we concluded—quite justly, as afterwards appeared—that Diawúsi would probably spread the report that the white men were coming to his assistance to support him by force of arms if necessary. On this supposition the hostile attitude of the Chief of Soku was easy to understand, and it seemed probable that an even more hostile reception might await us at the capital.

Diawúsi himself adopted a most friendly tone, although he made some rather awkward attempts to play off the French officers against us and to make capital out of our expected jealousy of them. He urged us to make common cause with him, promising to use all his influence (which did not seem to be much) in our interests; and when we

ventured to allude to the presents he had received from the French, and to suggest that he had, perhaps, made similar engagements with them, his virtuous indignation knew no bounds, and his countenance assumed an expression which I can only compare to that of an infuriated pug-dog. We resisted all his blandishments, however, and informed him that our mission was to the king, and that until we had seen and spoken with the king we could make no promises and enter into no engagements. Moreover, we assured him, our purpose was entirely peaceful, and we did not intend to meddle in the political affairs of the country.

This statement, which we caused Odonkor to bellow at the top of his voice for the benefit of any of the king's spies who might be present, produced a murmur of dissatisfaction among the Prince's followers, and the meeting shortly after broke up; but we presently learned with dismay that Diawúsi intended to remain with us and accompany us to Bontúku on the morrow, a circumstance that by no means increased our chances of a favourable reception.

CHAPTER VII

ARRIVAL AT BONTUKU

DEPARTURE from Soku—First sight of Bontúku—Reception by the King—Palaver—My House at Bontúku—My Landlord—Grand Palaver—Jáman Statesmen—Our Mission apparently successful—Hoisting the British Flag—Commissioner leaves for the Coast.

ON the following morning (22nd January) we struck the camp and marched out of Soku at 10 a. m., entering, almost immediately after leaving the town, a belt of thin forest. Through this we marched for nearly two hours when, our guide informing us that we had reached the outskirts of Bontúku, we halted to await the King's permission to advance. Very shortly after our arrival at this place a messenger came from the King to inform us that quarters had been provided for us in Bontúku and that His Majesty would give us a public reception on the following day.

To this arrangement the Commissioner would not agree, and there then ensued a long and wearisome palaver carried on by messengers, while our party waited not very patiently under the shade of a large silk-cotton tree. We were presently joined by Diawúsi and his people, who

wished to enter Bontúku with us, but we pointed out to them that we could not permit this as our association with the Prince might compromise us in the eyes of the King.

By-and-by, after a long delay, we received a message to the effect that the King would receive us at once, but that no public palaver must be held until we received notice in due form.

Even this proposition the Commissioner would not agree to, but nevertheless we formed up our procession and marched off preceded by the band, who tootled away in the most jubilant style.

Presently we emerged from the wood on to a wide plain which skirted the town, and now we obtained our first glimpse of the capital of Jáman, the goal of our long journey.

My feelings, as we rounded a belt of trees and opened out the city, were those of delighted admiration. So different was Bontúku from anything we had hitherto encountered and from what we had pictured it in our imaginations, and so flattering was the effect of the distance that separated us from it, that we felt as if we had suddenly emerged from our barbarous surroundings into an unlooked-for centre of culture and civilization.

And although this impression was considerably modified by subsequent and closer examination of the city, still it is a fact that Bontúku is a city of an entirely different class from any of the towns of the forest or littoral regions. In the place of the untidy and mean-looking aggregations of

thatched roofs so characteristic of these latter towns, here were long and seemingly regular rows of flat-roofed houses, their long, level walls surmounted by rows of slender pinnacles, while out of the mass of houses rose the spires and clustering pinnacles—all tipped with glittering ornaments—of two handsome and elaborately built mosques.

The indications of a superior culture in this district which appeared in the construction of the city itself were borne out by the appearance of the inhabitants, for as we approached the place where we were to meet the King, we encountered an immense crowd of persons mostly attired in the decent and even handsome costume of well-to-do Mussulmans. But if the appearance of these people was in some respects prepossessing, their aspect was by no means reassuring, for everyone of them was armed to the teeth, and their expression of countenance was the reverse of amicable.

The King and his chiefs and people were drawn up in a great semicircle, of which the King occupied the centre: while apart from the pagan Jámans a large body of Mahommedans, mostly Wongáras, were assembled, their religious head or Almámi, and an aged chief who was borne in a litter, presiding over them. The Mahommedans were all armed with short swords, knives, spears, and short bows with large leather quivers full of arrows. These arrows were unfeathered and, I afterwards ascertained, had large barbed points which were generally smeared with poison. They were of little use at long ranges, but at close quarters

were most formidable weapons. The King's followers were also armed in a similar manner, but there was in addition a considerable body of regular troops drawn up in a long semi-circular line, and these were all armed with the long firelocks locally known as "Dane guns."

The fully armed condition of the people, the presence of the troops in large numbers, their defensive formation and their threatening manner, rendered it obvious that they suspected us of hostile intentions and in the event of any demonstration on our part they intended to give us a warm reception. This suspicious and unfriendly attitude we attributed to the machinations of our friend Diawúsi, and we determined at the earliest opportunity to disclaim any connection with that too ingenious individual.

On receiving an intimation that the King was ready to receive us, we left our followers a short distance from the royal party and advanced. King Ajiman was a tall thin man between seventy and eighty years of age, rather bald, with white hair and a scanty white beard. His expression was intelligent and agreeable and his appearance venerable, while his manner was singularly quiet and dignified. He was surrounded by his principal chiefs, and both he and they received and saluted us with undemonstrative politeness. After we had passed along the line we moved on to the Almámi and the Mahommedan chief, and having saluted them, returned to our followers and placed our chairs in the middle of the line formed by the escort. The King, the chiefs, and the Almámi now returned our saluta-

tion, filing past us and shaking the hand of each of us in turn; they then returned to their seats, and the King's linguist informed us that the ceremony was finished and we might retire to our quarters. Of this intimation the Commissioner took no notice whatever, but, ignoring the King's expressed desire that there should be no palaver, he commenced to forthwith recite the political programme. This proceeding evidently caused no small annoyance to King Ajiman, and he listened to Odonkor's long harangue (in the Ochi language) with a very lowering countenance, and at the end of it requested the Commissioner to inform him "who asked the white men to come to Jáman?" To this ominous question the Commissioner replied that a certain person purporting to be a messenger of his (King Ajiman's) had come to Cape Coast and invited the Governor to send European officers to visit Bontúku, and in response to this invitation the present expedition had come.

"Is that messenger with you?" enquired the King.

Oh yes. He was with us; and poor Koffi Dabbi was directed to come forward, which he did, looking remarkably uncomfortable.

"I should like that man to be handed over to me," said the King, without glancing at our unhappy guide.

We enquired what would happen to Koffi if we handed him over.

Ajiman hinted that decapitation was the usual reward of treasonable conduct, of which he considered our guide to be guilty.

Upon this we declined to give Koffi up if he elected to remain with us (which he did with considerable emphasis), and as the King made no objection to the arrangement my playful "doki" renewed the lease of his life which had so nearly been "absolutely determined."

His Majesty, however, went on to explain that he had no knowledge either of Koffi Dabbi or of us, and he asked us, as a personal favour, to assure his chiefs and people who were present that he was in no way responsible for our presence and had had no hand in bringing us to Bontúku. As this was really the case, Odonkor was directed to inform the chiefs that we had come at Koffi Dabbi's invitation and not at that of King Ajiman. The King then pointed out to us that as we had come to Jáman without invitation and we were not wanted in the country, the best course for us would be to return without delay.

To this we replied that we had understood that the King of Jáman was amicably disposed to the English, and we hoped before leaving to effect a treaty of friendship between the two powers. We were going on to enlarge upon the advantages of such an arrangement when the King interrupted Odonkor, stating that he could not listen to our arguments at that time. He would appoint a time and place for a regular palaver, of which he would give us due notice, in the meantime he would talk the matter over with his chiefs and elders, and he requested us to now withdraw to our quarters.

We then formed up the expeditionary force and marched

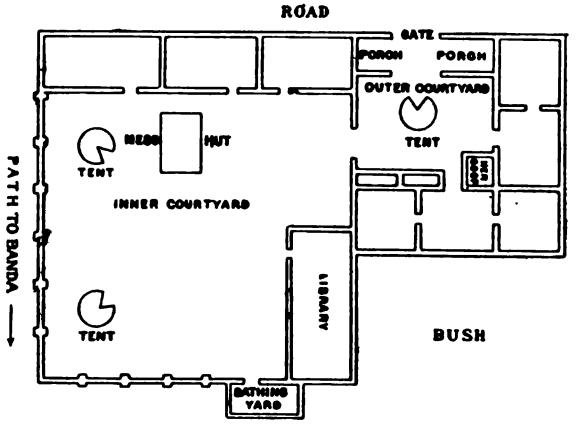
off after the guide who had been appointed to show us our quarters, accompanied and surrounded by a great crowd of armed men who pressed closely round our hammocks, shouting, gesticulating and, in many cases, menacing us in a manner that was extremely disconcerting.

A quarter of an hour's march around the outskirts of the town brought us to the houses that had been set apart for our use, one having a single large courtyard with numerous apartments surrounding it being allotted to the non-commissioned officers and men of the escort, and another of somewhat superior construction with two courtyards being reserved for the European officers. The carriers had no place specially allotted to them, but found quarters in the houses in the town.

The house of which I now found myself a tenant was as different from any house I had hitherto met with as the town of Bontúku was different from any of the towns of Ashanti or the littoral countries. In those countries the houses, although aggregated in compounds around the sides of which they are often arranged, are yet separate buildings, each house (containing generally a single apartment) having its own walls and roof and being separate from its fellows; but in these Bontukian houses the design is that of the caravanserai, the apartments being, as I have said, placed around courtyards into which they all open.

I give here a sketch of the house which I occupied, from which it will be seen that it consisted of two courtyards each having a set of apartments opening into it. The entire

premises were surrounded by a wall of sun-dried "swish" or clay about nine feet in height, which formed also the outer walls of the rooms. The outer courtyard, which was the smaller of the two, opened on to the street by a wide gateway, on either side of which were deep recesses forming a kind of porch, and here, during the heat of the day, numerous idlers were wont to collect, sitting on mats in



AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT BONTUKU.

the cool shade, while they stitched at their cotton caps and tobes, and chattered gaily, or chanted to the accompaniment of a rude guitar with horsehair strings. This smaller yard had rooms on two sides, in addition to which were some low lean-to structures intended for fowl-houses. The larger courtyard, which on account of its greater privacy we reserved for our own use, allotting the outer one to our domestics, communicated with the latter by an

arched opening. It contained four rooms and had attached to it a small yard for bathing purposes. The largest of the apartments I reserved for my own use, and as my books, instruments and specimens were stowed in it, it was known as "the library."

We pitched our tents in the courtyard to use as sleeping compartments, for the rooms were anything but inviting in appearance. Being lighted and ventilated only by the doorways, (for windows were an institution unknown to Bontúku,) they were dark and stuffy and were pervaded by a peculiar mouldy "fuggy" odour. The walls were of the rough clay perforated by the burrows of innumerable wasps, the floors of the same clay trodden down hard, while the flat clay roofs were supported by rafters consisting of untrimmed branches of trees of various sizes, in the interstices of which a curious and abundant fauna had their abode.

The strange feeling of abrupt transition from the paganism and savagery of the region which we had just quitted, to the relative civilization and quasi-oriental surroundings of our new home was emphasised by the people who appeared around us.

In Ashanti and pagan Jáman the natives who surrounded our camp stood aloof from us, peering timidly round corners, or if venturing to approach nearer, would at a sudden movement or a loudly-spoken word from us, scamper away chattering with fear like a pack of frightened monkeys. Here, immediately on our arrival, the courtyards were

invaded by numbers of Wongáras who sauntered in with the greatest self-possession, exhibiting the dignified and fearless demeanour common to the natives of Moslem Africa. Their dress was as distinctive as their manner. In place of the scanty loin-cloth which generally formed the sole covering of the pagan natives, or was, at most, supplanted by a ntama or country cloth, the Wongáras were clothed in a flowing wide-sleeved gown (tobe or *riga*) and wide trousers or *wondo*: their feet were protected by sandals or leather slippers, and their heads were covered either by a turban or more usually by cotton caps in shape somewhat like those worn in this country by brewers' draymen.

As I was preparing to put up my tent a small boy about seven years of age came capering into the yard, and running up to me, seized my hand and began climbing up my leg. That he was the son of Mahommedan parents I surmised not only from his little blue tobe and his shaven head with a circular tuft of hair on the crown, but also from his frank and fearless manner: for the Moslem children, being I suppose better treated than the pagans, are much less shy and timid. At most of the stations on the coast I had a large circle of acquaintances among the Hausa children, who used to accompany me in my walks. They were generally boys, but I remember on one occasion a small girl joined the party, when one of the male urchins who spoke a few words of English pointed her out to me, remarking scornfully, "Him be woman boy."

This small Bontukian had perhaps heard of my parti-

ality for children from our band boys, for he seemed determined to make friends with me: so I enquired in Hausa what his name was, to which he replied that it was Mahama, and he further added confidentially that his father was the "*oban-giski-n-gidda*" or landlord of our house, and that his name was Braíma.

I soon afterwards made Braíma's acquaintance, and he told me his history.

He had formerly been a slave, but when his master died he not only inherited his own liberty, but also the whole of the master's possessions. He was now a man of considerable wealth, owning several houses in Bontúku and practising the trade of a silversmith, besides making occasional excursions to distant countries, even, he told me, to Timbúktu (or Túmbutu as he pronounced it) to purchase slaves and other inland produce and to dispose of his wares. I mention this man's history because it is by no means a singular one, and because it exemplifies an aspect of the system of domestic slavery in West Africa that is not sufficiently dwelt upon by those who represent that institution as an unmitigated evil.

On the day following our arrival King Ajiman called upon us, accompanied by several of his chiefs. Each of these was attended by a small party of followers, including stool or chair bearers, but the umbrellas, which in Ashanti and the forest countries formed so conspicuous a feature in all ceremonial gatherings, were here conspicuous by their absence. This struck me at first as rather curious, for in

this open region there is evidently more need of umbrellas than in the dark and shady forest; but on reflection it would appear probable that the deep shade in which the forest peoples habitually live, has made them somewhat more susceptible to the heat of the sun, and has given rise to the custom of carrying umbrellas when walking or sitting in the open.

I took this opportunity of examining the stools and chairs belonging to the King and chiefs. The former were similar in design to those used in Ashanti, but distinctly superior in workmanship. The chairs were of hard wood with leather seats and backs, and were strong and admirably constructed. They were of two kinds, both, I should think, copied from European models. One type was similar in design to the ordinary old-fashioned English elbow-chair, and was perhaps copied from the old Dutch chairs in Elmina Castle; the other variety was made to fold, and bore a good deal of resemblance to some old Flemish chairs that I have seen, although they were more probably copied from the cheap folding tennis chairs which have of late been largely imported at Cape Coast.

The finest example that I saw was a very small folding chair covered with antelope hide; it was very highly finished in an extremely hard wood, and among other ornaments it had carved in high relief on the foot-rail some excellent representations of the common Agate shell *(Achatina variegata)*. The owner of this little chair was the King's linguist, a diminutive hunchback of extremely suave and gentle manners and of remarkable intelligence.

When the chairs and stools had been ranged in a semi-circle the King and chiefs took their seats, and a few speeches were made; but they all preserved a most diplomatic reticence as to their views and intentions. However, the King informed us that he would hold a full palaver on the following day, and would then discuss our business at length.

On the following afternoon (24th Jan.) we prepared to sally forth to the palaver ground, with considerable misgivings as to what the day would bring forth, for the most alarming reports had reached us of the hostile feelings of the King and chiefs.

We were considerably relieved therefore, on reaching the palaver ground, to observe that, although large numbers of armed men were assembled, there was an absence of the bellicose manifestations with which we had been greeted on our arrival two days previously. We also observed with surprise and gratification that a man stood behind the King's chair, holding a Union Jack—where it had been obtained I cannot imagine, unless Lonsdale gave it to the King when he visited Bontúku in 1882.

Ajiman had assembled all his principal chiefs for this palaver, and I could not help reflecting as I looked at their keen intelligent faces, on the singularly erroneous ideas which prevail in this country regarding the leaders of the West African races. The common conception of the "nigger" as formed by the average European is reached by observing the negro labourers who work on board

ships or on shore at the African ports, and is about as just as would be an estimate of the English upper classes formed after the inspection of a crowd of dockers or agricultural labourers.

I have already described King Ajiman as a tall venerable old man of pleasant exterior and agreeable manners. The chief who sat at his right hand was Boitin, his principal adviser and the commander of the largest division of the army. Boitin was a man of about sixty-five, of medium height and quite bald, with a quick vivacious manner and a keen shrewd face. He did not regard us with great favour, and was a firm opponent of Diawúsi. Next to Boitin was Kókobu, a much younger man, although he was chief of Sáppidi, one of the largest cities of Jáman. He had an extremely pleasant face full of character and intelligence, and the most magnificent set of teeth I have ever seen. Kókobu was evidently somewhat of a diplomat, for he seemed on the best of terms with everybody, and when we made his acquaintance we found his smiling, gracious manner quite irresistible. We noticed, however, that he kept out of all disputes, and although willing to make himself extremely agreeable, adroitly avoided giving any information or advancing any opinions upon any subject whatever. On the King's left hand was a chief of very different aspect and character from the suave and politic Kókobu, and one whom we examined with no little interest and curiosity. This was the redoubtable Papi whom we had been led to regard as our especial enemy.

He was an extremely tall, powerfully built man, and was active and even atheletic in spite of his great age (which I subsequently ascertained to be upwards of eighty years, from the fact, of which he informed me, that he was present at the battle of Essamáko when Sir Charles McCarthy was killed, on 21st January, 1824, he being then a youth about 18).

His visage was beetling, fierce and resolute, and a somewhat sinister expression was imparted by a defect in one of his eyes. His manner was gruff and uncivil, although somewhat jocose, and contrasted strongly with the polish and politeness of other chiefs.

In addition to these were several other Jáman chiefs, including Sei Koffi, chief of the pagan quarter of Bontúku, Kudjo Kórsono, Kwaku Kra, and others whose names I do not remember. These represented the various districts of Jáman. Bontúku itself, which was rather a Wongára than a Jáman city, although the capital of the latter Kingdom, was represented by the Limámu (or Almámi), a Wongára chief named Ali, Sidíchi, a sherif of Bontúku, and a number of Mahommedan elders.

The Limámu, who appeared to be not only the spiritual head of the Mahommedans of Bontúku, but also their temporal guide and chief civil authority in all matters of a peaceable nature, was really a most charming old man, and was very properly held in the highest reverence by the people of the district, both pagan and Moslem.

The impression that his patriarchal dignity and his

gentle fatherly manner made upon me when I first saw him, was fully confirmed when I came to know him better and found how just and benevolent was his disposition, and with what tact and sagacity he managed his people.

He was evidently of a great age, for he appeared old enough to be Papi's father, and this, no doubt, contributed largely to the influence which he commanded.

Ali was nominally the civil head of the Mahommedans of Bontúku and was their leader in war. He was paralyzed in one arm and leg and had hence to be carried in a litter; but his maimed condition did not appear to have influenced his spirits, for he was an extremely fiery and rather quarrelsome little man.

The remainder of the chiefs may be described when we make their further acquaintance: we must now proceed to the matter of the palaver.

After a short preamble in which the circumstances that led to our presence were again reviewed, the King—speaking through his linguist in the Ochi language—proceeded to explain his relations to the French Government.

He remarked that, although he had given the Frenchmen a friendly reception, he had in no way agreed to place his country under French protection. He had indeed accepted French flags and had signed a treaty, but in the latter he had merely undertaken to encourage trade with the French port of Kinjabo (near to Assini) and to maintain friendly relations in general. He went on to say that in former years the trade of Jáman was almost entirely with Cape

Coast, which was regarded as the white man's port, but that of late, since the Ashanti war (of 1873—74), the greater part of the trade of Jáman had been diverted to Kinjabo in consequence of the unsafe state of the Kumasi road. He greatly regretted this change and would much prefer to trade with the Cape Coast people—he always referred to the English territory as "Cape Coast," not apparently recognising any of the other stations—and hoped that we should now be able to make some arrangements by which this could be effected. He expressed his willingness to place his country under the protection of the English, whom he regarded as the masters of this part of Africa, and stated that he was now prepared to sign the treaty.

On our suggesting that the fact of his having already executed a treaty with the French officers might occasion some difficulty in the future, he promised that the French flags should be handed over to us and that we should be allowed to examine the French treaty and satisfy ourselves that it was of the nature that he represented.

Hereupon we produced our treaty, and when it had been read over to the King, the signatures were added, the King and chiefs making their marks, while the Limámu signed his name in Arabic characters. The three European officers and Odonkor having witnessed the signatures and having signed and sealed the document on behalf of the British Government, the process was completed, and Ajiman was informed that his country was formally accepted as a British protectorate.

All that now remained was to hoist the British flag in our newly acquired dominions, and preparations for performing this imposing ceremony were made forthwith. A tall and crooked pole was produced, in one end of which a hole had been bored, and through this a native rope of plaited grass was rove. The pole was planted in the ground and the ends of the rope attached to the flag, while the "standing part" was held by a sergeant in readiness for the signal to hoist.

The escort then fixed bayonets and shouldered arms, the officers struck an attitude, and the bandsmen inflated their chests. Then after a few moments of imposing silence the command was given to present arms. With a smart rattle a hundred rifles were brought to the "present"; the officers' swords flashed to the salute; and the band struck with great spirit the first few chords of the national anthem. Then the music suddenly ceased, and was succeeded by the sound of suppressed giggling from the ranks. We turned round sharply to see what had happened, and beheld the sergeant gazing foolishly at a portion of the rope which he held in his hand, while the flag "that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze" lay ignominiously on the ground. He had given a sharp tug at the rotten rope, with the idea of sending the colours up smartly, and had snapped it off near the top of the pole. This accident occasioned great confusion, for the flag had to go up, but there seemed no way of hoisting it until a new rope had been procured and the flagstaff taken down to be refitted,

which would occasion a most undesirable delay. At this juncture Joe came up, evidently in great enjoyment of the situation, and offered a suggestion. He had with him a naked urchin who, he assured us, was remarkably agile, and he suggested that this youth should "swarm" up the pole with the flag in his hand. This plan the Commissioner, with some reluctance, adopted; the escort and officers forthwith saluted afresh and the band repeated its rendering of the National Anthem, while the small boy ascended the pole, waving the Union Jack and presenting a most striking resemblance to an ingenious toy familiar to most British juveniles.

At the conclusion of this ceremony we exchanged congratulations with the King, and Ajiman then took the opportunity of telling us that now that we were allies he hoped we should march together against the King of Ashanti and recover the gold stool, which was originally the royal seat of the kings of Jáman, having been captured by the Ashantis at the commencement of the present century.

We told Ajiman, however, that we had no intention of making war upon anyone, and that we were at present quite friendly with the King of Ashanti. Ajiman then remarked that as we had now settled the business which had brought us to Bontúku, he hoped we should return without delay, our presence tending to disturb the country and interfere with the markets.

When we returned to our quarters we held a council in which we debated what was the best course for us to pursue under the circumstances. We had been by no

means prepared for the King's ready agreement to sign the treaty, but had on the contrary rather expected some kind of hostile demonstration, and we were disposed to regard his acquiescence as a mere manœuvre to get us out of the country as rapidly as possible. We felt that the treaty that had now been signed could have no validity until it had been confirmed by the authorities at head-quarters, and we had serious doubts as to the propriety of our retaining possession of the French flags and treaty even if the latter should turn out to be of the nature that it had been represented.

After discussing the matter at great length we came to the conclusion that the proper course would be for the Commissioner to return to the Coast for further instructions, while the Major and I remained at Bontúku.

Having arrived at this conclusion, we set about making our residence somewhat more comfortable. The most obvious desideratum was a place in which we could take our meals without being exposed to the sun or the rain. The rooms in our house were out of the question, for they were pervaded by a stale and mouldy odour that was most unappetising, and the tents were unbearably hot in the day-time. We therefore proceeded at once to erect a small hut of palm leaves, with a wooden frame, leaving one end entirely open, and this afforded us complete shade and protection from the weather, while the loose and open nature of the material of which it was constructed rendered it delightfully cool and airy.

Besides forming a comfortable dining apartment it served as a screen for my thermometers and a Mason's hygrometer by which I was able to make a series of observations on the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere.

The second night of our sojourn in Bontúku we were visited by a heavy tornado, which burst on us shortly after we had turned in. I lay listening to the roar of the rain which poured down in torrents. By the almost continuous lightning I could see that the floor of my tent was covered with water, and I began to wonder with some anxiety whether the tent ropes had been sufficiently slackened. While I was turning this over in my mind I suddenly heard, mingled with the rumbling of the thunder, a crash as of shattering glass, and the next moment I found myself smothered under a mass of wet canvas, the tent pegs having been dragged out of the ground and the tent collapsed. I crawled out presently from underneath the ruin and paddled up the flooded courtyard to the Major's tent, where I sat shivering and cogitating (aloud) until the penitent Joe—who had arrived just in time to witness the catastrophe—had set up my camp bed in the "library"; and here despite rats and cockroaches innumerable I passed a most peaceful night.

A day or two after the palaver the King sent us the French flags and treaty, as well as a present of gold dust worth about forty pounds sterling. This latter was, of course, paid into the treasury in accordance with the regulations which forbid officers to accept presents from the native

kings or chiefs. We took the opportunity of informing Ajiman of the course we intended to take. He was greatly relieved to hear that the Commissioner would return at once, but he strongly disapproved of any of the party remaining at Bontúku.

On the 30th the Commissioner with a small escort and a party of carriers, set out on his return journey to the Coast. He did not propose to return through Kumasi, but selected the more westerly route which passes through Séhui. I subsequently learned that he covered the distance very rapidly, but I could not obtain details of the country through which he passed.

We had now the prospect of a stay at Bontúku of not less than two months, for in no shorter time would it be possible for any instructions from the Coast to reach us.

CHAPTER VIII

BONTUKU

SPECIAL Character of the City—Its Position—The Mosques—A Walk through the City—Dye Works—A Tailor's Shop—A Glassworker's Shop—The Market Place—A Refreshment Stall—Native Merchants—A Bargain—Native Silversmith.

THE city of Bontúku, situated in latitude 8° 5′ 51″ N. (by observation) and longitude about 2° 30′ 0″ W. (by reckoning) is one of the most important and remarkable towns in this part of Africa.

It is the capital of the Kingdom of Jáman and was, I believe, formerly the residence of the Kings of that country; but its interest and importance arises not from this circumstance, but from the fact that it forms the principal rendezvous of the caravans from Kong and Timbúktu and the Western Sudan, which engage in the kola traffic of Ashanti. It holds, in fact, the same relation to the great Western caravan road that Sálaga does to the Eastern route, and it shares with the latter city the peculiarity that its inhabitants are mostly immigrants from a foreign district, and that its level of civilization and its general character differ widely from those which obtain in any of the contiguous

towns. With the mere mention of this fact, on which I shall enlarge in a future chapter, I pass on to the consideration of those features of the town which impress the observer.

The thing that struck me as, emerging from a belt of dense wood, I suddenly came in view of Bontúku, was that it was totally different from any other African town that I had seen. In travelling from the coast into Ashanti and from Ashanti into Jáman every stage of the journey brought into view some natural or artificial features which were new and noticeable, and every new town or village presented some peculiarities that were novel and strange. But these differences were merely generic. The towns of Ashanti, widely different as they were from those of the littoral districts, were yet but extreme modifications of the same type, and the towns of Jáman again were but varieties of a type already familiar in Ashanti.

But Bontúku presented a character that was entirely strange and apparently unrelated to the towns which we had already seen, and produced in me, when I first beheld it, a feeling of transition as complete and abrupt as if I had suddenly come in sight of a European city.

This feeling was, no doubt, partly due to the fact that I was taken by surprise, for I was quite unprepared to find Bontúku in any way different, except in size, from the other towns of Jáman, and these, as I have mentioned, were, like the Ashanti towns, somewhat irregular collections of circular or oblong houses with high-pitched roofs of

thatch. On entering such a town, that which principally met the eye was thatch—ragged-edged, untidy-looking thatch drooping over half-concealed walls of clay, and the general impression of a town of thatched houses was that it was mean-looking and primitive.

In striking contrast to these, Bontúku, as it first burst upon my view, presented a great aggregation of long, regularly built, flat-topped houses, rising tier behind tier on the slope of a low hill, like the benches of an amphitheatre. The horizontal lines of the long level walls were

BONTUKU.

broken by ranges of slender pinnacles, while out of the mass of buildings rose the spires and pointed turrets of the mosques, which at first sight had the appearance of small Gothic cathedrals.

As I gazed in pleased surprise at this unlooked-for spectacle, I felt as if I had in a moment stepped out of barbarous Africa into the civilization of an Eastern city, and in my enthusiasm began to form mental pictures of culture and magnificence which further experience was far from realising. For a closer inspection showed that distance, which proverbially lends enchantment to the view, had

laid on many a flattering touch. The long straight walls on near examination showed themselves to be rudely built of rough, sun-dried clay; the pinnacles were clumsy and shapeless; the houses were mean and low, and the cathedral-like mosques dwindled down to insignificant proportions, their spires mere pyramids of clay and their turrets coarsely executed obelisks. Yet, when the first feeling of disappointment, the result of exaggerated anticipations, had passed away, it was evident that Bontúku was in many respects a great advance upon the towns of the South. Although in the matter of decoration it was incomparably inferior to Kumasi, even the ruined and half-deserted Kumasi of to-day, still one could not but feel that it was the product of a more developed people. Kumasi was the centre of an art and a culture that, although elaborate, was essentially barbaric. Bontúku was a mean and squalid outlier of civilization.

The city occupies the centre of a somewhat undulating plain which is enclosed by a horse-shoe-shaped range of hills. The ground upon which it stands rises very gently towards the North, so that the buildings appear, as I have said, in successive tiers, one rising above the other.

It is essentially a Wongára town, and the architecture is similar to that in vogue in such towns as Sego and Kong, and even Timbúktu and Agades; although there is a pagan quarter, forming a sort of suburb to the South-East, in which the natives of the district live and where the rectangular thatched houses of the Jámans may be seen mingled with the circular houses of the Ntas.

The dwellings of the Mahommedan town are in general similar to the one that I occupied, which has been already described. They are built round square or oblong courtyards enclosed by walls of clay from eight to twelve feet high, which are strengthened at frequent intervals by buttresses, the summits of which project some distance above the walls. The roofs are in all cases flat and are surrounded

A STREET IN BONTUKU.

by parapets, and the rain is carried off by projecting pipes of earthenware or wood. There is naturally a good deal of difference in the degree of finish with which the houses are executed: in some the workmanship is extremely rude and primitive, while in others considerable regard for appearance is shown. In the houses of the more well-do-do Wongáras the buttresses terminate in pinnacles which are in some cases surmounted by ornaments of silvered glass, and the parapets are enriched with rows of smaller and

more slender pinnacles. The walls of the more modish residences are carefully smoothed and coated with grey distemper, and in some cases are pierced with ornamental apertures, converting them into a sort of fretwork, which not only improves their appearance, but lights and ventilates the apartments.

The streets are mostly narrow and crooked, although there are one or two wide and open thoroughfares, and are lined by sombre expanses of walls broken only by an occasional doorway, (for windows are, as I have said, unknown in Bontúku,) and in the less frequented parts of the town they have a very dreary, deserted aspect in the middle of the day; but in the evening, when the citizens disport themselves on the flat roofs, which they reach by means of rude ladders formed of notched posts, this monotony gives place to gaiety and animation.

The public institutions consist of three mosques and a market. Of the former, one differs from a large dwelling-house only in the possession of a large door guarded by a curious wooden lock; but the other two are very remarkable and characteristic buildings. One of these, which is rather the larger, is situated on the northern outskirts of the town, while the other is nearly in the centre, quite close to the Limámu's house. They are almost identically similar in structure, but the smaller one is rather more carefully finished and better decorated, and in this the Limámu usually officiates. It is a nearly square building with a flat roof, and has two towers which occupy the east and west aspects

respectively. These towers are square in plan, and one side of each is united to the wall of the building. In shape they are slender pyramids tapering very gradually towards their summits, which are surmounted by finials of a very odd character: at the apex of each spire is an inverted china wash-hand basin, above which is a large goblet of silvered glass, both, of course, of European manufacture—and the whole is crowned with an ostrich's egg. Besides the two principal spires there are several smaller spires and numerous pinnacles, each surmounted by ornaments similar to those above described, which, in spite of their rather incongruous nature, are really very effective at a little distance. The ends of the beams forming the frame-work of the spires project externally about two feet, and the rows of these projections when seen from a distance have the appearance of crockets and greatly increase the resemblance of the building to a Gothic church. The mosque stands in a courtyard which is enclosed by a wall about five feet high, the top of which is ornamented by a row of pyramids surmounted by spheroidal finials.

In consequence of our unfortunate collision with the people of Bontúku I was unable to examine the interior, but, from what I was told, I gathered that it consists of a square hall, on the east and west sides of which are recesses formed by the towers.

Although rude and primitive in their details on close inspection, these mosques, (for the above description is equally applicable to the larger one,) when seen from a

A MOSQUE, BONTUKU.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

sufficient distance, appear quite graceful and even handsome buildings, and while they lack the neat and careful finish and the rich ornamentation of the buildings of Kumasi they are greatly superior to them in design and general effect.

The market-place is in the centre of the town, not very far from the smaller of the two mosques above referred to. It is a large open space of an oblong shape, and communicates at one end by means of a wide gateway, with a smaller oval space, on one side of which is the house of the Wongára Chief Ali. The market is held daily, although there is a regular market-day recurring at intervals of about six days. The middle of the market-place is occupied by a double row of stalls, over most of which Wongára women preside; the upper end, which is shaded by a large silk-cotton tree, is reserved for a company of Hausa merchants, and the booths which line the market-place on either side are similarly occupied.

There is, near to the central mosque, a smaller square or open space upon which the Limámu's house fronts, and another still smaller one to the east of the market, in which are some dyeing wells. With these exceptions the town is composed of a dense network of narrow streets and sinuous alleys lined by monotonous stretches of buttressed walls, through which naked children, lean pariah dogs, scraggy sheep and goats and somewhat emaciated oxen roam at will.

The surface soil of Bontúku is a yellowish-grey loam resting upon an immediate subsoil of gravel composed of small angular fragments of quartz, and this, I think, rests

upon a stratum of the yellow clay of which the houses of the town are built.

The sanitary arrangements of the town are extremely primitive, and the water-supply is apt to become contaminated; in fact, during our stay an epidemic of dysentery occurred which was evidently due to this cause. The water is obtained occasionally from a small stream to the south of the town, but more largely from a number of wells near the Banda road.

The population of Bontúku is probably between 7,000 and 8,000, of whom more than two-thirds are Mahommedans.

And now, having given a general outline of the features of interest of this city, I will ask the reader to accompany me in one of my daily peregrinations that he may examine it in more detail.

Out through the shady gateway (where the sentry hastily separates from his cronies and comes to the "shoulder"), in the recess of which sits a Wongára lazily twanging a seven-stringed harp—while a small group of his friends squat around stitching together strips of cotton cloth, or meditatively chewing kola-nut,—into the glaring street whose road and walls are baking in the burning afternoon sun. Across the uneven roadway we hurry, making for the scanty shadow of the southern wall, which incloses the compound appropriated by us as barracks or "barrikin," as our men call them. A few paces along we turn to our left down a narrow street inclosed on either side by the walls of houses of the better class—walls about 12 ft. high, of rough

sun-dried clay, strengthened at intervals by buttresses of considerable thickness, the upper ends of which terminate in blunt pinnacles. The tops of the walls form parapets inclosing the flat housetops, and on these already a few of the inhabitants are to be seen sitting about gossiping, or perhaps, like Uriah's wife, taking an open-air bath. After following the winding of the street for about 200 yards, we arrive at an open space like a small square, in the centre whereof is a group of indigo pits which, as illustrating an important local industry, we may profitably stop and examine.

There are here three pits, each consisting of a well some 5 ft. across, surrounded by a coping of sun-dried clay about 2 ft. 6 in. high. On peering into one of these we observe that it is filled with a dark-blue fluid, on the surface of which floats an iridescent scum. On the coping of one of the wells a man is standing, stirring the contents with a long pole, and we notice that his hands and the portion of the pole which is immersed are dyed a deep blue. We are also sensible of a curious, penetrating, and excessively disagreeable odour which seems to be elicited by the stirring process. The details of the native method of indigo manufacture seem to be somewhat as follow.

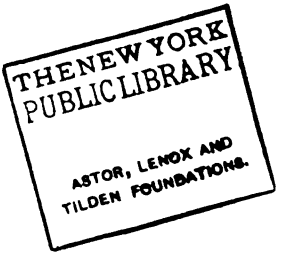
The leaves of the plant, having been gathered, are pounded in large wooden mortars, and dried in balls about 6 in. in diameter. These balls are burnt, and the ashes, mixed with the ashes of the shea-butter (*Bassia Parkii*) and other trees, are set aside. More fresh leaves are pounded, made

into similar balls, and dried. These are washed in water, strained off (the filtrate being rejected), and again dried in flat circular cakes like large buns, piles of which may be seen heaped around the wells. The cakes are put into the wells previously filled with water, and a quantity of the mixed ashes having been added, the fluid is stirred at frequent intervals for about ten days, during which time a kind of fermentation goes on. An abundance of blue froth collects on the surface, and the fluid, being now of a deep blue colour, is ready for use as a dye.

This indigo blue is the universal colouring medium for all kinds of textile fabrics in this district, and is applied in a great variety of ways. Its colour varies from quite a pale blue to a blue-black; and various devices are used for producing alternate stripes of light and dark colour. In some of the thin face-cloths which are worn by the Hausas and Tuareks the fabric is so saturated by the dye that its surface is quite glossy and iridescent; and the unpleasant odour evolved in the process of fermentation adheres to the cloth for months. In many cases the yarn is dyed before being woven into cloth, and thus intricate and often beautiful patterns, mostly of evidently Saracenic origin, are produced. The dyed yarn is also used in working embroidered patterns on finished garments; and the taste and skill displayed in doing this would be a revelation to those who picture the aboriginal African in their minds as "the naked negro panting at the line."

If now, having examined the dye wells and inspected

DYEING WELLS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BONTUKU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the long strips of cotton cloth hanging on the drying frames which surround them, we pass through the narrow doorway of a house at the corner of an intersecting alley, we shall enter the business premises of Yusufu Al-haji, a tailor (*maidumke*) by trade and a Hausa by birth; and, as Yusufu is a pleasant spoken, obliging man, he will offer us a share of the goat-skin whereon he sits, with the simple appliances of his craft spread around him, industriously embroidering the enormous pocket of a creamy white *riga* or gown.

So we seat ourselves on the skin and smoke our pipes, while Yusufu, still stitching away busily, discourses smilingly on the glories of his native city of Kanu; his eulogies receiving frequent and emphatic confirmation from his friend and assistant Adamu Bakanu (Adam of Kanu), who lounges in the doorway, chewing kola-nut. Yusufu's tools, which he keeps stowed away in a handsome carved calabash, are few and simple. A few large-eyed needles of European make, a bodkin fashioned from the horn of a small antelope, and a beautiful little dagger-like knife (of which the steel hilt is handsomely inlaid with copper and brass) form his whole equipment. His material is equally simple; a heap of narrow strips of cotton cloth, looking like unwound surgeon's bandages (the native loom can only weave a strip 4 in. wide, so these strips have to be united edge to edge before a garment can be made), and a few balls of buff and dark-blue yarn form his stock in trade. And yet with these simple materials and appliances Yusufu managed to

turn out some extremely good and artistic work; in fact his workmanship was so excellent that I was induced to give him an order for a white *riga*, which he made for the modest sum of 12,000 *kurdi*—about twelve shillings—including material. His method of measuring was simplicity

CARVED CALABASH OR GOURD-SHELL.

itself. Taking an immensely long "bandage," he hung it about my person in festoons until he had built up the semblance of the finished garment; he then deposited the whole in a heap and commenced forthwith to join it up. In a few days the garment was finished, and its appearance reflected the greatest credit upon the craftsman's skill and taste; it was elaborately and elegantly embroidered with

dark-buff yarn, which had an extremely delicate effect on the creamy white of the material.

From Yusufu's modest abode we journey through a multitude of narrow tortuous alleys and malodorous by-streets until, near the confines of the town, we halt before the low doorway of a house rather more squalid and neglected in appearance than the average of Bontukian residences. Near the gate of the compound two or three meagre, straight-haired sheep are quarrelling over a dry plantain-skin, and the threshold is occupied by a group of naked children whose only decorations, besides sundry patches of yellow clay and dust upon their ebony skins, consist of a leather necklet, an oblong tuft of wool on their shaven crowns, and a broad stripe of shining kohl, or powdered antimony, beneath the margins of the eyelids.

Stepping across the threshold, and stooping to avoid the low lintel of the doorway, we find ourselves plunged into an obscurity in which our eyes, dazzled by the bright sunlight outside, can for a while distinguish nothing. Presently, however, as we become accustomed to the gloom, we are able to make out something of our surroundings. The chamber in which we stand is essentially similar to those which have been already described; its cracked, uneven walls of rough, undressed clay, and its ceiling formed of rude rafters blackened by smoke. Near the centre of the earth floor is a round hole some 8 in. in diameter, and from this issues a ruddy glow, which lights up the rather haggard face of a tall, spare man who sits on the floor

beside the opening, into which he occasionally probes with a slender iron rod.

Mahama Ba-Katchina, the occupant of these premises, is in many respects a somewhat distinguished member of

YUSUFU THE TAILOR AND MAHAMA THE GLASS-WORKER.

Bontukian society; distinguished by his genial and pleasant manners, by his extensive travels and knowledge of the African world, by his skill in the manufacture of glass armlets (*tagulai*), and lastly, I regret to say, distinguished among his fellow Mahommedans by his too convivial habits.

The means and appliances by which Mahama carries on

his curious craft are nearly as simple as those of the tailor whose house we have just visited. The furnace consists of a large water-jar buried in the floor, its mouth opening on the surface; its bottom being perforated, two tubes are led into it, their opposite ends being inserted into two goat-skins, which are worked alternately as bellows by a

A MAKER OF GLASS ARMLETS IN HIS WORKSHOP.

small boy who squats between them. The fuel is wood, which, in the intervals of rest, smoulders into charcoal, and when roused by the blast of the bellows gives out a clear, white, smokeless glow. The other appliances consist of a few pairs of rude iron tongs, thin iron rods, a heap of broken Dutch gin-bottles, and a narrow wooden tray filled with tiny, many-coloured beads, such as are used at home for ornamenting mats.

The first proceeding is to stir up the dull embers with one of the iron rods, and then the word is given to the small boy, who rejoices in the curious but not uncommon name of Allah, [1] whereupon the bellows are worked vigorously for a few seconds until a bright white light issues from the mouth of the furnace.

Mahama now selects from the heap of broken glass a large fragment of a Dutch gin-bottle, which he holds with tongs in the mouth of the furnace, not bringing it in contact with the glowing embers. Presently the glass reaches a dull red heat, and then its angles become gradually rounded, and it shows evident signs of softening. The workman next seizes the softened mass with a second pair of tongs, and pulls it out into a narrow strip, the two ends of which he joins by pressing them together. The tongs are now discarded, and the softened red-hot ring of glass is played about over the mouth of the furnace on two rods until it has been modelled into the desired shape and size. The next step is the ornamentation of the surface; which is achieved by carrying the ring (still in a red-hot state) on the two rods, and rolling it quickly along the tray of beads, of which numbers adhere to the molten surface. The armlet is then returned, thickly incrusted with beads,

[1] This custom of naming male children after the Deity is also met with in the Coast tribes, amongst whom the names Nyami and Kwesi, or Quashie, are common; the latter names, indeed, being invariably given to boys born on Kwesi-da or Sunday; girls born on the same day being named Ekuasua or (in Nga) Akwassía. The Ochi name Nyankupon, however, seems to be applied exclusively to the Supreme Being.

to the furnace, where the beads quickly melt down into a uniform, many-coloured mass, completely covering the original white glass. The still soft armlet is now stretched slightly, so that the spots of different colours are drawn out into lines, producing a kind of marbled or agate-like appearance; and with a little more modelling, the article is finished and set aside to cool.

The armlets when completed, have a much neater and more ornamental appearance than might be expected from the rather rude method of their manufacture. The prevailing colour is red, with streaks of blue, white, and other colours—giving them, as I have said, somewhat the character of agate. The shape is very much like that of a quoit; and they are usually worn in pairs, two on each arm, just above the elbow, the flat surface of the contiguous armlets being in contact. Those made by Mahama were greatly in request amongst the more dandified Wongáras of Bontúku and the surrounding towns, and usually sold for about twenty cowrie-shells each, and one set, which he manufactured from the fragments of a broken green glass lampshade of mine, was sold, I believe, for quite a fabulous sum.

Mahama's house is only a short distance from the market, so thither we will direct our steps, although it is now rather too late in the day to see the business in full swing.

The genial Mahama is easily persuaded to take a holiday and give us the benefit of his company, so, having banked up his little furnace and put away his tools, he leads us out of his dark workshop into the street, where we stand

for some seconds blinking and dazzled by the glare of the sunlit road.

We now thread our way, under his guidance, through a maze of narrow crooked streets and presently emerge into an open space opposite the smallest of the three mosques. Mahama draws our attention to the "*Masallâski*" which, unlike the other mosques, is a plain unpretentious building with a wide doorway, closed by a door formed of an immense slab of silk-cotton wood, on which we observe the curious wooden lock. A few steps to the right bring us into the lower end of the market-place.

Here, although it is well on in the afternoon, all is bustle and activity, and we soon find ourselves wedged in among a dense throng of people of all nationalities, many intent on barter, but many, too, like ourselves mere idlers and sight-seers. The whole length of the market-place is occupied by a double row of stalls, nearly all of which are presided over by Wongára women, and between the two rows a wide avenue is left, through which the motley crowd constantly surges. These stalls are devoted to petty trade, to the disposal, that is, of local produce by the villagers of the neighbourhood for the supply of daily domestic wants. Some of them are merely mats spread on the ground, or wide calabashes filled with the wares that are offered for sale; more usually they consist of circular wicker-work trays or wide wooden trenchers, laid across the open mouths of upright sacks of basket work in which the stock-in-trade is carried. On many of the trays or tren-

chers the produce is laid out in little lots of a certain stated value: little heaps of salt worth, perhaps, four or five cowries each, small piles of shea-butter balls, and little conical heaps of a large yellow caterpillar which happens to be very plentiful in the country just now, and which seems to be regarded as a great delicacy by the Bontukian epicure. As we walk round and examine the stalls we find a plentiful supply of food: large green plantains, custard-apples, sour-sops, papaws, pine-apples, rice, Guinea-corn, maize, white beans very like haricot beans, pigeon peas, yams, "cocoa"-yams and sweet potatoes: ground-nuts, pumpkin seeds, balls of a dried vegetable with a strong garlic-like smell, a kind of aromatic sweet-smelling nut: maize-flour, bean-meal, balls of a paste made by pounding the seeds of the Baobab, and other articles of country produce too numerous to mention.

There are also stalls in which ready-prepared refreshment can be obtained. Here, for instance, is a woman with a huge jar of a red soup-like fluid of extremely unappetizing appearance, made from the fruit of the Agoa-beam palm, on the surface of which floats a small calabash which serves at once as a measure and a drinking cup; and here is a Hausa man driving a roaring trade in dough-nuts or small pancakes (*masa*), which he dispenses fresh from the pan to customers, who depart with tingling fingers, whisking their purchases from one hand to the other as one sees urchins in the streets of London when they have just acquired a baked patato "screeching hot" from the can. As we stand

looking on, the "pastry cook" prepares to manufacture a fresh supply of the inviting-looking little cakes. With a wooden scoop he accurately measures out a quantity of maize-flour, which he deposits in a calabash, and to this he adds a similar quantity of bean-meal. Water being added, he mixes the meal into a thin paste or batter. The cooking utensil is an oblong slab of earthenware having six hemispherical depressions, each about three inches in diameter. This is placed on a wood fire which burns in a shallow earthen pot, and in each of the little cavities a portion of shea butter is deposited, which presently begins to fizzle and splutter with the heat. When this occurs the cook takes a small ladle formed of a tiny calabash lashed to a stick, and fills it with the batter, which he pours successively into the six cavities until they are full. In a few minutes the cooking process is completed, and the six little hemispherical cakes are neatly fished out of their respective cells with a wooden spoon, and laid, all crisp and brown and smoking, in a basket tray to cool, or deposited in the outstretched hands of some hungry customer.

The sides of the market-place are lined with booths,—low sheds with roofs of thatch, and floors raised some eighteen inches, forming a kind of platform. Each booth is separated from the adjoining ones by a partition of wood or rough trellis, so that it possesses three walls on which the wares may be displayed. In the booths the more important trade of the district is carried on, the wares being of more value and brought from a greater distance than those exposed

on the stalls; although I was told that the larger business transactions are conducted at the houses of the merchants, of whom the more opulent consider it rather beneath their dignity to expose their goods in the market, and this I think is correct, for I was introduced to several well-to-do merchants from Timbúktu and Kong who had very valuable merchandize, but who never entered the market.

The booths are exclusively occupied by Mahommedan merchants, Hausas from Sokotu, Kanu and Kachina, Bornus from Kuka, Wongáras, principally from Kong, and Fulas from various towns of the interior.

They are mostly well-dressed, courteous, dignified men, who sit on the rugs with which their booths are carpeted, and gossip, read their books of devotion, finger their beads and chew kola-nut. They are always ready for a chat with a stranger and willing to explain the nature and uses of the articles they sell, and they are quite free from the shyness which less civilized natives exhibit in the presence of white men. We therefore approach a booth tenanted by a venerable, white-bearded Hausa and a younger man, apparently his son.

Mahama steps forwards and exchanges the customary "*Sanu-sanu*" and explains who we are, with such additions and embellishments as he considers necessary to produce a suitable impression—probably he palms us off on the unsuspecting old man as kings on tour, or at the very least, as chiefs of the first magnitude. On this the old gentleman raises the lid of a handsome little basket and

extracts some kola-nuts which he offers us and which we decline with thanks, excepting Mahama, who crams a whole nut into his mouth and expectorates gleefully. We enquire as to our friend's country, when he informs us that his native town is Kanu, but that he has lately come from Timbúktu—or, as he calls it, Túmbutu—and that the journey from that city to Bontúku occupied seventy-two days.

He next shows us some of his goods, of which he is rather proud: some handsome gowns from Kanu of the kind the Hausas call *riga saki*, he is willing to dispose of for the moderate sum of 50,000 kurdi; some fine *wondo* or drawers he sells at 60,000 (but would probably take 30,000); the high price of these, he explains, is due to the fact that they are elaborately embroidered in green silk. Then he has some curious boxes of undressed skin, like parchment, some of which have designs stained in dark red on the lids; sandals and slippers of various coloured leather; leather satchels of exquisite workmanship; queer little leather bottles for carrying the powdered antimony with which it is customary to mark the edges of the eyelids; fine cotton cloths; shawls of mixed cotton and silk; woollen rugs and multitudes of other articles of luxury and use.

The mention of the large sums which are required to purchase some of these, leads us to ask if he always receives payment in cowries (*kurdi*), upon which he produces, with evident pride, a small box, from which he extracts a tiny pair of scales. These he tells us are for weighing gold dust, the medium by which his larger trans-

actions are carried out, and he takes from his huge pocket a tiny brass casket, which he opens, and shows us a number of little scarlet globules on each of which is a black spot. These are the seeds of *Abrus precatorius* (which grows on the Guinea coast as well as in Asia), the well-known "prayer beads" or "jumble beads" of the East and the Jequirity of the surgeons. They are used all over West Africa as gold weights, and are reckoned in Ashanti, where they are called *Damba*, as the twenty-fourth of an angel, which is the sixteenth of an ounce in Africa. (In Europe an angel is, I think, the twentieth part of an ounce.) Our old friend reckons up the value of some of his goods in gold according to these weights, making use of his rosary to assist him in his calculations. This, by the way, appears to be a very usual proceeding with these merchants, and their beads are extremely convenient for the purpose, being strung on a cord, not linked immovably together like the beads used by Roman Catholics.

We have been for some time casting somewhat covetous glances at a handsome *riga saki* which is hanging on the trellis at the side of the booth, and we now venture to enquire the price of it. At the prospect of a deal the old gentleman pricks up his ears, and, reaching down the garment, commences to expatiate upon its various excellencies, winding up with the remark that it would be preposterously cheap at 50,000 kurdi: whereupon Mahama claps his hand over his mouth, displays the whites (or rather the yellows) of his eyes, and murmurs "Alla!" with

an air of incredulity. Experience of the local methods of barter has taught us that the price demanded by a merchant in the first place is not to be taken seriously—it is merely a feeler to test the quality of the purchaser. So we modestly offer 20,000 kurdi, upon which the old merchant responds, "Albereka!"—literally "Bless you!"—the ordinary equivalent for "Thank you," and by usage, the polite form of refusal in the haggling which accompanies all commercial dealings. Mahama now interposes with a long harangue, gently depreciating the *riga* and extolling our generosity in making so magnificent an offer, and the old merchant having listened attentively to this oration, commences to cautiously "climb down." He might be prevailed upon to accept 45,000 kurdi as he has a great regard for white men in general and the present ones in particular.

"Albereka!" replies Mahama with great promptitude, and so the chaffering goes on for the space of half an hour, until the price has been brought down to 30,000 kurdi—equal to twenty-five or thirty shillings, according to fluctuations in the value of the cowrie—which being not very much above its market value is agreed to, and the *riga* is despatched to my house by one of the merchant's slaves.

We now turn our steps homeward, and as we return through the still crowded market-place we are much impressed by the different effect our presence has on different classes of natives. The Hausa merchants view us with little surprise and greet us with a frank smile and courteous "*Sanu*"; the Wongáras bow silently or murmur

"berika" [1] as we pass; the tall slender Fulas stand aside to let us pass, and their intent black eyes are turned on us with a searching glance through the narrow slit of their *litham;* while the natives from the adjacent villages stare at us for a moment in open-mouthed amazement and then bolt in among the crowd, and we see them presently peering at us over the shoulders of their bolder comrades.

As we leave the market by the upper end we pass a colony of Hausa traders who have established themselves under the shade of a silk-cotton tree. They have spread a number of mats on the ground and on these their merchandize is laid out. This consists, besides the usual slippers, sandals and other Hausa wares, of a few articles of European make, the only specimens which we have met with in the market. The stock comprises fish-hooks—large and coarse, needles, small fragments of looking-glass, and a few printed cotton cloths. Evidently European goods are not in much demand at Bontúku.

Hard by an itinerant barber is plying his trade, squatting on the ground as he shaves the head of a customer who is seated in front of him. We stop and examine his razors, short clumsy-looking implements stuck in wooden handles, and as we test them with our thumbs we are surprised at the keen edge which has been imparted to them by the

[1] Hausa for "blessing". Hausa is the recognised language of commerce and is used commonly in addressing strangers by most of the Mahommedan peoples of West Africa.

rough-looking fragments of stone that lie on the mat; but we decline the offer of the grinning operator to demonstrate his skill on our own scalp.

As we journey homeward we pass the house of our landlord, Braíma (or Ibrahima) the silversmith, and at Mahama's solicitation we enter. Braíma is just about to commence the manufacture of a silver armlet, and at our request he proceeds with his work while we look on.

His appliances are not unlike those which we saw in Mahama's workshop, but, in the place of the underground furnace, he has a kind of forge formed by a shallow pit in the ground, communicating by a pipe with a pair of goat-skin bellows, between which squats our little friend Mahama, who greets us with a broad smile of recognition. Braíma produces from a leathern bag one or two English florins—apparently some of our money—which he deposits in a clay crucible and places this on the fire, and the small boy sets to work with the bellows. In a few moments the previously dull charcoal is throwing out a bright white glow, and very soon the silver is completely melted. The crucible is now removed from the fire, and the molten silver is poured into a deep groove in a flat clay slab, where it solidifies into a bar, which is laid on a smooth stone anvil and gently hammered into a regular cylinder. This is bent into a circle, the ends being brought into close apposition, but not joined, and now, as far as its form is concerned, the armlet is complete. Braíma shows us one which he has recently finished. It is covered with engraved lines in

a geometrical pattern, executed with a file, and is further enriched with a multitude of circular punch marks.

From Braíma's residence we saunter homewards, and arrive just as the bugle is sounding "retreat" and the Union Jack is being hauled down from the rude flag-staff that stands in front of our house.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE IN BONTUKU

THE Official Fire-Water—Native Travellers—An Offer of Marriage—Visitors—Patients—The Cowrie—The "Library"—Native Collectors—Fauna of the "Library"—Flies—Fleas—Bugs—A Wongára Singing Man—Visits to the Limámu—Walks in the Bush—Birds—The Filament-winged Night-jar—Scarabæi—Evenings at Home—Venomous Spider—Author gives a Dance—Drum Music—West African Folk Lore—Fable of the Vulture and the Crow—Native Astronomy—Religious Ideas—The Abónsam or Devil—Inhabitants of the Moon.

AFTER the departure of the Commissioner, life at Bontúku soon began to settle down into a fairly regular groove.

The regular official duties with which the day opened, comprising medical inspection of the detachment and attention to the few sick, were soon disposed of, and then, as a rule, callers began to arrive. During the first week or two of our stay we received almost daily visits from the King and Chiefs, either together or separately, who manifested a very friendly feeling towards us when we had fairly made them understand that our intentions had never been otherwise than peaceful. On the occasion of these ceremonial visits the official gin was brought forth and half a tumblerful poured out for each visitor.

Native etiquette required that we should take a sip out of each glass before handing it to our guests, and as the gin was none of the best and was consumed undiluted this was far from an enjoyable feature of the entertainment; and, as I have previously remarked, our guests did not appear to care for the liquor much more than we did, or their mode of exhibiting their enjoyment was somewhat eccentric, for, having swallowed the fluid at a single gulp, they fell to grimacing and expectorating in a manner suggestive of the blackest of black draughts. I noticed that before drinking each poured a small quantity on the ground—a libation, it may be presumed, to their gods.

Besides the king and the chiefs we received a great many calls from the Mahommedan merchants who were staying in the town as well as from the better-class Wongára residents. These quite unofficial visitors were attracted to us partly by curiosity and partly by the hope of receiving presents, and many of them were introduced by Futa and Onitchi (my orderly) who knew that I wished to meet and converse with travellers from the interior. The knowledge which some of these travelling merchants displayed concerning the geography of West Africa rather astonished me: one man especially, a native, I think, of Zaria in Hausa, named Salifu Bun Mahamadu, appeared quite conversant with the whole tract of country from Sego in Bámbarra to the lower Niger, and could give detailed itinaries from Bontúku to Timbúktu—which he, like most of the people whom I met, pronounced Túmbutu—by three

different routes, and also to the cities of Bámbarra, Hausa and Bornu. But his information was of little geographical value in the present state of our knowledge of Africa, and as his greediness made him an intolerable nuisance I soon dropped his acquaintance.

With some of my other visitors, however, the acquaintance ripened into friendship which was, I think, on both sides quite disinterested and sincere. Among these was Sidichi, one of the Mahommedan elders of the town, a very quiet, well behaved, amiable man, who apparently became much attached to me and spent many a morning sitting on a mat in the "library," chatting with me about our respective nations. Sometimes he would call for me in the evening to stroll round the town or out into the country with him, or he would invite me to visit him at his house. One mark of his esteem I found a little embarrassing, for he appeared one morning at the door of my tent accompanied by a gaunt middle-aged Wongára woman who he informed me was his sister, and about whose health he had come to consult me; but when I had prescribed for her he told me that he intended to make me a present of her. At this I regarded the lady with speechless dismay as she stood at Sidichi's elbow, grinning like a *memento mori* and casting on me an eye that was about as languishing as that of a defunct dog-fish. It was extremely awkward, for the gift was kindly meant by Sidichi and was a really valuable one according to local ideas. The woman was worth, I daresay, 60,000 cowries—and I feared that my

refusal would be taken both by Sidichi and his sister as a personal affront. However, I succeeded after a long explanation in making them both understand the peculiar views held by white people upon the subject of matrimony, and in proving that a previous engagement prevented me from availing myself of this exceptional opportunity. So Sidichi departed with the Rose of Sharon, escorted to the gate by the irrepressible Joe, who, by a superhuman effort, kept himself bottled up until they were fairly outside, when he sat down on the ground and gave free vent to his feelings until the Major rushed out of the mess-hut and administered a gentle physical reproof; upon which he became suddenly serious.

The Limámu had two grandsons named Ali and Ibrahima, both extremely well-mannered, intelligent young men, whose acquaintance I made at their father's house and who afterwards spent much of their time at my quarters. They generally brought some work with them, cotton tobes and caps, and stitched away busily as they talked. They had evidently some knowledge of the Christian religion, which they regarded as merely a variety of their own; for on one occasion, observing some photographs on my table, Ali asked me if I had a portrait of Jesus. It happened that I had with me an etching of Filipo Lippi's "Nativity," so I produced it and allowed them to examine it, explaining the incident that it represented. They were very much pleased with it, and on several subsequent visits they asked to be allowed to see it again.

These native friends were of great service to me, for through them I was able to get information of what was going on in the town of a much more reliable character than that which was brought by our Hausas, who, as events proved, were far from trustworthy news-bearers.

The last of my friends that I shall refer to is Mahama, the glass worker, who was a constant visitor at my quarters and seemed very devoted to me: indeed he had more in common with the white men than the other citizens of Bontúku, for he had served under "Golibar" (Sir John Glover) in the Ashanti war, and he appeared one day at my house in a pair of delapidated side-spring boots to which he drew my attention with great pride, informing me that they had been given to him by that redoubtable officer. He was a good-natured, careless, jovial fellow, very popular in the town, and in spite of certain convivial tendencies highly unbecoming in a Mussulman, his skill as a craftsman and the experience he had gained in his travels caused him to be much respected by his neighbours.

When it began to be noised abroad that one of the white men was a medicine-man the throng of visitors was augmented by numbers of persons suffering from divers diseases, who presented themselves for treatment, and before long I had quite an extensive practice. The cases were mostly surgical, requiring small operations, and the natives were greatly impressed with the superiority of European methods over their own rude and inefficient surgery.

At first I gave these people my services quite gratuitous-

ly, wishing to give them a favourable impression of Europeans, but after a time I found reason to abandon this policy. I was from the first struck with the extraordinary

MAHAMA.

assiduity displayed by Joe and Onitchi in looking up patients and bringing them in to see me, and I could not help regarding this sudden outbreak of philanthropy on their part with some suspicion.

On my mentioning the matter to Sidichi, this suspicion

received complete confirmation, for it appeared that these two gentlemen had been busily canvassing the town for patients, each one of whom they charged a certain fee as "gate money" before they would admit them to the compound to see me.

After this I refused to allow either Joe or Onitchi to act as agents or interpreters, and I made the more well-to-do patients bring some kind of offering as a fee, a much better arrangement, for in Africa free services are neither understood nor appreciated.

Now and again a morning was devoted to "shopping" in the market, the purchases consisting for the most part of cloths, shawls, leather work, and other products of inland industries; and on these occasions I was generally accompanied by Futa as interpreter and one of the carriers as pursebearer, the purse taking the form of a wicker sack holding about a bushel of cowries.

The cowrie shell (*Cypræa moneta*) is the universal currency in West Africa, although in Ashanti it is to a great extent replaced by gold dust. Even in the towns of the British Protectorate it is still in use for all small transactions, for the natives resolutely decline to accept copper coin, and the threepenny-piece is the smallest British coin that is in general circulation. It is not found on the coast of West Africa, but is a native, of the Pacific and Indian oceans. The shells are probably brought to West Africa to a large extent by caravans from the East Coast, especially Zanzibar; but they were formerly—and may still be—im-

ported in large numbers by European traders, for in 1848 there were imported to Liverpool alone sixty tons, all of which were intended for the West African trade. The use of cowries as money is not peculiar to Africa nor is it a custom of by any means recent origin, for shells of an allied species (*C. annulus*) were found by Dr. Layard in the ruins of Nimrod; and one may suppose that their use in West Africa is of some antiquity, for the enormous numbers that are now distributed throughout the country must have taken a considerable time to accumulate. This form of currency has many advantages. The shells are light, practically indestructible, and being of no intrinsic value there is no tendency for them to be withdrawn from circulation to be applied to other uses, as would certainly occur with metal coins. They are, however, excessively inconvenient for large transactions by reason of their bulk; and in large numbers are apt to occasion loss in exchange, as the value continually fluctuates. When we first arrived at Bontúku eight hundred were equal to the value of one shilling; they afterwards fell to the value of a thousand for a shilling, and on one occasion they sank to twelve hundred. Native merchants avoid these inconveniences by reserving the cowries for comparatively small dealings, conducting larger transactions either by direct barter or by means of gold dust, the value of which is fairly constant. Cowries are commonly counted in "strings," "bunches" and "heads," forty cowries forming a "string," five "strings" or four hundred cowries forming a "bunch," and ten

"bunches" or two thousand cowries forming a "head," worth, as I have said, about two shillings.

The hottest hours of the day I usually spent in the "library" which was much cooler than the tent; the latter, indeed, was during that time quite uninhabitable, for the sun poured through its double roof as though it were muslin, and the interior was like an oven. In this little apartment I had deposited most of my household goods, and I soon began to settle down in it with that sense of comfortable homeliness with which a hermit crab settles himself into a commodious whelk shell. Its furniture was simple and, although it might have been open to criticism by a fashionable upholsterer, it served its purpose. My deck chair; a table, formed by the simple expedient of driving four stakes into the earth floor and fastening a box lid on them (which contrivance was apt to "give out" at intervals when the white ants came up through the floor and devoured the legs); a sideboard or cabinet, consisting of an empty box placed on its side and having the lid propped up by two sticks, which supported some of my books, drawing materials and instruments, formed the regular "suite"; while a few baggage cases ranged round the walls, on the lids of which were spread out my collecting bottles and boxes, theodolite, camera, and sundry volumes forming my travelling library, completed the furniture of this primitive chamber.

Here I sat in comparative coolness when the mid-day sun was pouring down upon the baking compound and filling

it with a blinding glare: when our servants hid away in their little dark cells and the sentry crouched in the shadow of the porch: when the vultures sat and dozed on the hot walls and the distant trees flickered and shimmered in the palpitating air like masses of heated vapour. This was the time when I posted up my journal, plotted my surveys and sorted my specimens, which latter, by the way, required a good deal of sorting, for I employed some of the carriers as assistants in making collections, and the results of their efforts in this direction were remarkably heterogeneous. At first I tried to make them understand what my object was in collecting, but as this proved quite hopeless, I directed them to search for living things of all kinds and to bring them to me without any attempt at selection. The consequence of this was that they usually appeared, after a morning's collecting, triumphantly carrying calabashes or pots piled up with huge millipedes—with which the neighbourhood abounded—or shells, generally dead and bleached and all of a single species. When the yellow caterpillars which we saw in the market were "in season" my assistants were jubilant and brought them in by the quart, so that, to get rid of them, I was compelled to give them away to my Bontukian friends, who took them home and made them into soup.

These employments furnished plenty of occupation and amusement in the hours which I was, for the sake of coolness, compelled to spend in "the library"; moreover, the place itself was by no means without objects of interest,

for the rafters supporting the flat roof gave shelter to various members of the animal kingdom with whose presence I could have, perhaps, dispensed, but whose habits I often amused myself by observing. In addition to numbers of a small and extremely agile species of rat (whose gambols among the rafters afforded me a great deal of entertainment) and an occasional snake or lizard, the roof was infested by hordes of a portly, turtle-shaped cockroach of an obese and sluggish habit, which had a most objectionable trick of dropping unexpectedly on to my head. The walls were perforated by cylindrical tunnels which were constructed and inhabited by a gorgeous species of wasp, the most magnificent insect, I think, that I have ever seen. The thorax, legs and antennæ were like highly burnished gold; the abdomen was of a brilliant metallic green, and the wings a deep diaphanous blue. Its habits, I regret to say, were not such as accorded with its distinguished appearance, for it obtained a disgusting livelihood by preying on the cockroaches, fastening upon its victim just behind the head and burying its jaws deeply in the succulent flesh; and often-times the pair locked together, would drop down from the ceiling upon my book or writing paper.

Besides these insects, this room, like the rest of the premises, was filled with swarms of flies, which literally blackened the floor and every available surface upon which any light fell. Their numbers made them a most disgusting nuisance, and they appeared more intrusive than flies usually are, for they settled thickly all over my head and

face, especially round my eyes, and wandered up my sleeves and trousers until I was driven to the verge of madness. These flies were properly an indigenous plague; they belonged to the place and were probably a permanent feature of the locality, the abundant animal garbage of the Mahommedan quarter sufficiently accounting for their numbers. But there was another plague for whose existence we were partly responsible, to wit, one of fleas, with which the mess-hut literally swarmed. They were introduced, I think, by a dog of the Major's which died soon after our arrival at Bontúku, leaving us this legacy. They rapidly increased in numbers, finding in the dry sandy floor of the hut a most favourable *nidus*, until the nuisance became insupportable. As I sat or stood in the hut a dense cloud of black specks appeared on my white clothes and steadily advanced upwards, so that I was compelled to brush them off every minute to prevent them from swarming on to my neck and face. When things reached this pass I felt that some decided measures must be taken; and remembering that the larva of the flea is extremely sensitive to moisture, I hit upon the expedient of keeping the floor of the mess-hut and my tent constantly flooded with water. A half-dozen of the carriers were told off for this special duty, and in a few days hardly a flea was to be seen. The Flea—*i.e.*, the Common Flea (*Pulex irritans*)—is in my experience very rare in West Africa, in fact I only remember meeting with it on one previous occasion, which was at Ketta (or Quittah) Fort in the Bight of Benin, where

it was introduced by a cat which was kept there as a pet and which, like the Major's dog, was a native of Europe. Equally rare in my experience is that still more objectionable insect, the bug, and here again our house at Bontúku and Ketta Fort were unfavourable exceptions, the third being the chief's house at Dunkwa. The specimens at Ketta were the common bed bug (*Cimex lectularius*) and had been, I think, imported from Europe in some Government stores; but those at Dunkwa and Bontúku were of an indigenous species, similar in appearance and habits to the European species, but rather more elongated in form.

The rarity of these insects in West Africa, I imagine, is to be explained by the very small amount of clothing worn by the natives—who, moreover, commonly sleep in the open air during the dry season and thus dispense with bedding—and the nature of that clothing, which consists rather of loose wraps than regular garments fitted to the body; and especially by the prevalence of the carnivorous ants which when they pass through a house clear it not only of insects, but even of rats and mice.

One afternoon as I was sitting in the "library" reading I suddenly heard a prodigious uproar which proceeded from the front of the house, and presently above the shouting my ear caught a sound somewhat like that of an aged and rather wheezy piano. On going to the gate to ascertain the cause of this strange phenomenon, I found a large crowd assembled in the street, in the centre of which were three

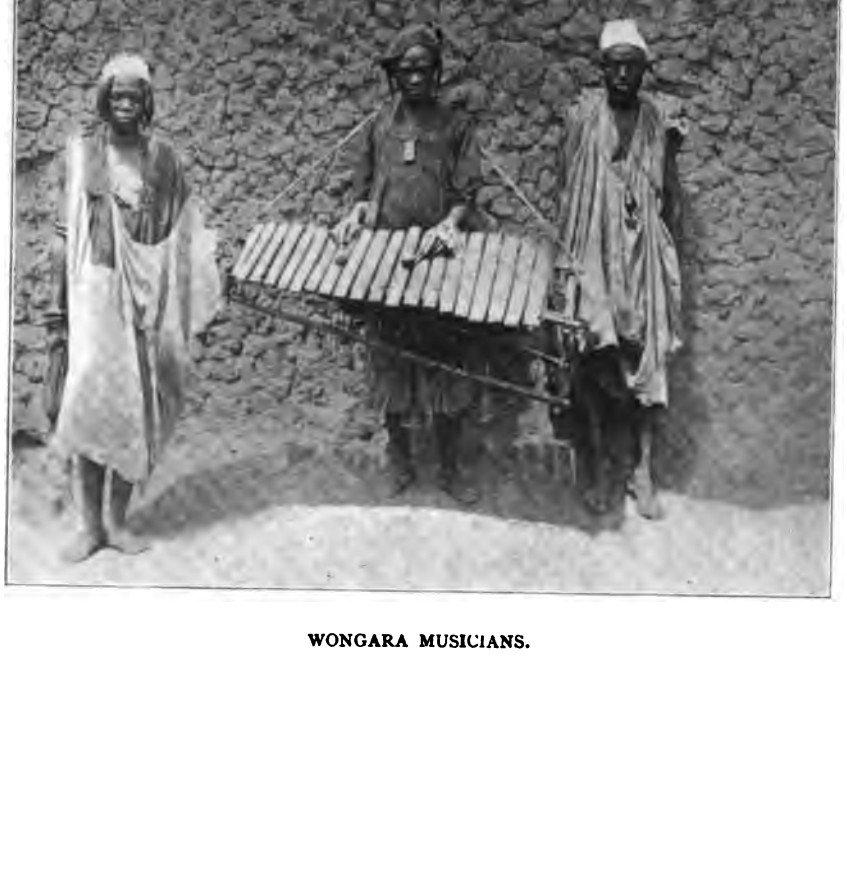
Wongára singing men, one of whom accompanied his song by a performance on a kind of rude dulcimer.

I invited the troupe to come into the courtyard and give me a private entertainment, and they presently appeared, bellowing like bulls of Bashan, and took up a position in front of the library door.

The dulcimer player now favoured me with a solo, accompanying himself on his instrument. The song was apparently improvised, for Sidichi—who had come in with the minstrels and acted as interpreter—informed me that it was in praise of white men in general and myself in particular; in which case my peculiar virtues must have been on that occasion brought to the notice of every person within a radius of a quarter of a mile who was not stone deaf. But although the song was for the most part roared out with such energy as to amount to mere hallooing, its execution was not entirely devoid of expression, for occasionally the singer would let his voice fall to a softer pitch, touching his instrument more lightly meanwhile: moreover, the melody was distinct and pleasing, though irregular in rhythm, quite different from the incoherent rambling airs chanted by many of the coast tribes, and was rendered with some spirit, though, as I have said, much too boisterously. The musician appeared, too, to have some definite notions of harmony, for the elaborate accompaniment that he played accorded admirably with his song, and in the pauses between the verses he struck off some clever flourishes and runs, harmonized principally in octaves and fifths.

The instrument upon which this man played was of a kind that is in extensive use among the Wongáras and Mandingoes, by whom it is known by the name of *Balafu*, and its construction, although rude, was very curious and ingenious. It consisted of a light framework, about three feet long, of stout sticks lashed together, oblong in shape and tapering towards one end: this supported twenty small logs of an extremely hard and resonant wood, which did not rest directly on the frame, but on two strings that were stretched tightly about two inches above it. The billets of wood were arranged in a series gradually diminishing in length from two feet to six inches, and under each billet was suspended a flask-shaped calabash of a size corresponding to that of the billet above it, *i.e.*, containing a column of air that, when set vibrating, would produce a note in unison with that given out by the billet. The notes were struck by two hammers, each consisting of a carved stick with a knob of india-rubber at the end. A sharp blow was necessary to bring out the full sound of the instrument, which was much more agreeable than might have been expected, reminding one of the somewhat wiry tone of the old-fashioned "Broadwood square."

When the performance was finished I ventured to try my "prentice hand" on the *Balafu*, and was surprised to find not only that the instrument was most accurately tuned, but that the order of the notes was precisely similar to that of European keyed instruments, so that I was able to execute "God save the Queen" and several other familiar



WONGARA MUSICIANS.

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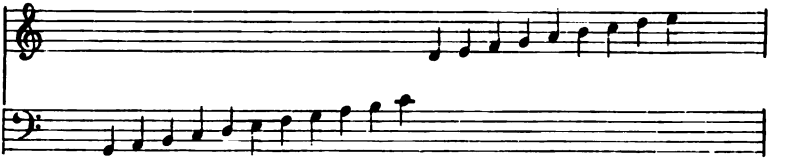
melodies to the great admiration of our followers and the profound astonishment of the singing men.

The range of the instrument, as shown below, was two octaves and five notes, and the scale in which it was tuned appeared to be the ordinary diatonic major, there being, of course, no arrangement for accidentals.



NOTES OF THE BALAFU.

The close of the sultry mid-day period was ushered in by the arrival of Joe with the tea, which was served in the library, to the unspeakable joy of the flies, which forthwith settled down upon the sugar so that it was soon completely hidden from view, while the tin of condensed milk became a veritable "catch-'em-alive-O."

The period intervening between this meal and dinner was devoted to social calls and expeditions round the town, or to the market, or walks into the country. I very frequently spent the latter part of the afternoon with the Limámu, who was accustomed at that part of the day to sit outside his house in company with some of the Mahommedan elders, and pass the time in conversation, or in reading or copying certain Arabic manuscripts.

The old man always gave me a very kindly reception and had a large circular leather cushion placed on his rug

for me to sit on, and both he and his venerable colleagues took an evident pleasure in conversing with me and explaining the customs and institutions of the country. When our talk turned upon religious topics he was rather more reserved than his sons Ali and Ibrahima, but, like them, he appeared to regard Christianity as little more than a variety of the religion that he himself professed: and so far was he from feeling any antipathy to Christians that, on one occasion, he invited me to visit the mosque during the hours of worship, an invitation of which I was unfortunately prevented from availing myself by the collision which afterwards occurred between us and the people of Bontúku.

During one of my visits to him the Limámu remarked that some of his Wongára friends occasionally visited Cape Coast, and that in the event of their doing so at any future time he would like to have the means of sending me a greeting. I told him my name and explained as far as possible my position, but when he had made several rather unsuccessful attempts to repeat the words after me, he said that he thought it would be much better if I would write my name and description on several pieces of paper, one of which he might give to any traveller proceeding from Bontúku to the coast. So I drew out my pocket-book and fountain pen and wrote my name and probable whereabouts on several leaves which I tore out and presented to him. While I was writing, the old gentlemen craned over my shoulder and watched with intense interest, exchanging whispered comments and criticisms during the performance,

and when I had finished they expressed the greatest admiration at the ease and rapidity with which I wrote and the smallness of the character. They were very curious about my fountain pen, especially as they observed that the marks it made were of actual wet ink: so I explained the construction of it to them and afterwards allowed each of them to write with it, which they did with extreme delight, giggling and "chaffing" one another like a pack of schoolboys. Occasionally, when I was sitting with the Limámu and his friends, I made sketches of passers-by and I also made a couple of drawings of the mosque, of which the Limámu's house commanded a full view; but I noticed that my performances as an artist interested them much less than my exploits as a penman, in fact I think they were rather disgusted to see a man of my age and gravity wasting his time in so childish a pursuit.

On the days when there were no calls to make I usually spent the interval from tea to sunset in a ramble into the country along one of the caravan roads. In these jaunts I was sometimes accompanied by Sidichi or Mahama, but more commonly I went alone and I found a solitary walk in the bush extremely restful after the noisy publicity of our residence. At first I always used to take my rifle with me, but as I never encountered anything more formidable than a monkey or an antelope, I soon abandoned the weapon in favour of the more portable and familiar walking-stick.

It has often been a matter of curious speculation to me,

what becomes during the daytime of the numerous large animals that inhabit the open country of West Africa, and especially difficult is the problem in the case of such countries as East Jáman, where there appears to be hardly a vestige of cover. In most parts you may often walk for a whole day without seeing as much game as you would encounter in a ramble across an unfrequented English common, and yet no sooner is the daylight gone than the country is full of life. Now every clump of bush that you pass starts and shakes as you approach it; every patch of high grass rustles as its occupants bound away in the darkness; shadowy forms are indistinctly seen in the dim light moving among the trees, and the air resounds far and near with all kinds of strange cries.

There were many excellent roads leading from Bontúku to other towns in the district, and most of these I explored at one time or another, but the one most favoured by me in my afternoon walks—principally for the reason that it was near to our house—was the main road to Banda, the entrance to which was marked by a great Bombax, of which there were several forming conspicuous landmarks in the town.

The country along this road was fairly typical of that immediately surrounding Bontúku and was somewhat different on the two sides. That on the right hand, proceeding towards Banda, was mostly open, covered with clumps of low bushes and occasional coppices of silk-cottons; while on the left was an extensive wood composed of trees very

much resembling pear trees. Some parts of this wood were fairly open, the ground being covered with grass and the general appearance very much that of a pear orchard, but in other parts the spaces between the trees were filled with a dense undergrowth forming an impenetrable jungle-like growth. As in every other part of tropical Africa, the structures raised by the termites formed a conspicuous feature of the landscape, and very curious many of them were. Of the ordinary termitaria—conical mounds of bare clay from six to ten feet in height—there were in some places such immense numbers that an appearance was produced resembling that of a cemetery filled with monuments; but besides these there were structures of more regular form, one of the most curious taking the shape of a gigantic mushroom, while in others the central pillar or stalk was surmounted by a pile of hemispherical bodies placed one above the other.

Although, as I have hinted, the country did not present that abundance of animal life which many people at home are apt to associate with an African landscape, conceiving the latter as an immense open-air menagerie in which multitudes of wild beasts disport themselves for the entertainment of the traveller, yet, in the course of my many rambles along these roads, I now and again encountered some of the denizens of the wilderness, especially when I remained stationary for some time, as when making a sketch or grubbing for shells.

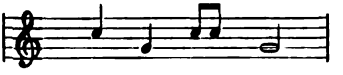
On one occasion a troop of large light-brown monkeys

came out of the bush to inspect me and followed me for some time along the road, now coming up quite close and surrounding me, with much grinning and chattering, and now scampering away and tumbling over one another in a sudden fright. Antelopes of different kinds, which

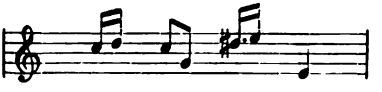
ON THE BANDA ROAD, BONTUKU.

were, I think, rather abundant in the district, were more frequently met with than any other of the larger animals, and once or twice when I was sketching, a herd of the beautiful harnessed antelope trotted by quite near to me without noticing my presence. I also saw a few very tiny gazelles, hardly larger than hares; but I never met with any of the large species of antelopes, although their spoor

was often visible and I saw their skulls and horns in the houses of the native hunters. The above with a few ground squirrels, some rodents like large voles and an occasional lemur, were the only mammals that I encountered in my walks around Bontúku. The bush was not, however, quite without life, for the feathered fauna was rather abundant and the woods resounded with their curious and, at times, rather uncanny cries. Hardly any of the African birds have a song at all resembling those of the small birds of Europe, but they, for the most part, emit sounds resembling those produced by various kinds of wind instruments. Many of them have a peculiar metallic whistling song like the notes of a silver flageolet, and these often execute little irregular melodies with remarkable distinctness and a perfectly clean-cut transition from note to note. Some of these little tunes consist of a few notes only, while others are more elaborate. One bird, which I could never identify, had a little monotonous song that ran thus:



Which he sang over and over again *ad nauseam*, while another trilled out with equal persistence a metallic, piccolo-like song, thus:



Some of the performances, however, were much more

complex and more difficult to remember; and one little bird—a sober-hued little fellow about the size of a thrush, with a tuft of feathers on his head—used to sing a most elaborate tune, the performance of which lasted fully a minute and was delivered with remarkable spirit and apparent enjoyment; but the air was so rambling and full of accidentals that I was never able to commit it to memory. Other birds uttered cries resembling the sound of a clarionet or a toy trumpet, while others again emitted sounds of a whirring character or like the creaking of machinery. While the sunlight lasted many very brilliantly coloured birds were to be seen flitting about among the bushes and trees: orioles, jays—the latter of a deep metallic blue and very noisy and garrulous, gorgeous bee-eaters dressed out in scarlet and blue, magnificent blue kingfishers, very similar to the beautiful little *Ispidina* of the Gold Coast, but larger, and multitudes of pretty little yellowish-green doves. I had intended to collect skins of the birds from the district, but my first experience as a collector was so disagreeable that the plan fell through. I was walking one afternoon along the Banda road when I perceived a pair of the brilliant blue-plumaged jays flying about a tree. Filled with the collector's lust I pointed my gun and the next moment one of the jays was lying on the ground; but the other bird, instead of flying away, instantly swooped down upon the body of its mate and perched by its side, screaming in the most piteous manner. At the sight of the poor bird's distress I was so overcome with shame and disgust

that I shouldered my gun and sneaked off, leaving my victim where he fell, and the bird-skin collection was never made.

As the evening closed in the more gaudily-coloured birds disappeared, and their songs were silenced, while the voices of various nocturnal species began to be heard. From out of the deep shadow of dense bushes the spectral brown cuckoo uttered his hollow sepulchral note; the vague indistinct cry of the night-jar mingled on all sides with the shrill song of the cicada and the droning of lumbering lammellicorns, while in the woods half-awakened owls aroused the echoes with lugubrious hoots. As I journeyed homeward in the dusk I was often accompanied by one or more Filament-winged Night-jars, which had a curious habit, common to many other birds of the same family, of settling on the path some distance in front of me and remaining stationary until I was within a few paces of them, when they would flutter away and again settle about thirty yards ahead. In this fashion one of these birds would sometimes travel with me for over a mile and only leave me as I entered the outskirts of the town.

The first time that I saw the Filament-winged Night-jar (*Macrodipteryx*) I thought I was the victim of some optical illusion. In the uncertain glimmer of the deepening twilight I saw on the road, some distance ahead, three small dark objects in a row, all of which appeared to be vibrating rapidly to and fro. As I approached the three objects rose simultaneously and flew away, circling round me several

times. I was now able to distinguish the form of a bird, but I was astonished to observe that as it flew it was accompanied by two dark bodies, one on either side, which maintained a distance of about seven or eight inches from its body and looked in the dim light like large moths. On a subsequent occasion I saw this strange bird earlier in the evening when the light was stronger, and the mystery was then cleared up. The feathers arising from the carpus of each wing were of enormous length, each feather being fully twice as long as the bird's body, and presented the remarkable peculiarity of having barbs or webs only at the extreme ends, the shafts of the feathers consisting of long and slender filaments. As the bird sat on the ground with its wings closed these feathers stood up almost vertically, the ends inclining slightly outwards, and as the filamentous shafts were, of course, invisible in the twilight, the appearance presented was that of a tuft of feathers suspended in the air on each side, several inches above the bird's body.

Insect life in this part of the country was not very abundant, but a few large ground-beetles were to be seen on most days scampering across the path, as well as various forms of Scarabæi.

These latter were not at all conspicuous at the time of our arrival (the Harmattan season), but during the last month of our stay at Bontúku they became very numerous both as to individual specimens and varieties. They made their appearance quite suddenly after a heavy tornado which occurred one afternoon about the middle of March

and was accompanied by torrents of rain, and on that occasion I first made their acquaintance. After some hours' confinement in the wet steamy tent—for the library roof was not quite tornado-proof—I emerged, stiff-limbed and perspiring, to take my evening walk along the Banda road, which had evidently been a miniature torrent during the rain. The thirsty soil had sucked up the moisture and was nearly dry again, but plants and animals alike seemed much refreshed and rejoiced in the grateful humidity. The leaves of the herbs and bushes had the delicate waxen look which is seen at home in the later days of a mild spring, and the young blades of grass seemed to have grown perceptibly since the morning. The birds were piping more cheerily than usual and seemed more numerous; "grass-cutters" and ground-squirrels had emerged from their hiding-places to crop the succulent herbage; millepedes glided and toads hopped about on the damp ground, and all living things had an air of relief and rejoicing at the awakening of Nature from her torrid sleep. A short distance out of the town I encountered an adventurous Scarabæus which had evidently taken advantage of the unwonted moisture to make his ball of dirt. This ball, containing one precious egg, he—or more probably she—was industriously rolling down the inclined path, standing head downwards with the fore-legs on the ground and trundling the ball along with the hind and middle legs. Now and again the progress of the ball was arrested by some obstacle and it had to be pushed to one side to get it clear, and whenever this happened

I noticed that the insect, before starting again, mounted on top of the ball and surveyed the prospect for some moments, apparently with the object of making sure of the general direction in which he was travelling, for when he descended he resumed his journey in the original direction. When he had travelled in this way about sixty yards the ball suddenly rolled into a hollow from which the most strenuous efforts on the part of the insect failed to dislodge it.

Having definitely ascertained that the ball could be moved no further, the beetle lost no more time, but proceeded forthwith to bury it; creeping underneath the ball so that his body was completely concealed by it, he commenced to excavate the earth with his powerful fore-legs, throwing up a little mound of soil on each side. The rapidity with which this was accomplished was quite surprising: in five minutes the ball had completely vanished, although it was very considerably larger than the beetle himself, and its former position occupied by a little heap of fresh dug earth. I waited about twenty minutes to see what further developments would take place, and at the end of that time I was gratified by observing a disturbance of the earth at the mouth of the burrow, and presently my little friend emerged, looking as clean and fresh as when I first made his acquaintance. He now proceeded to put the finishing touches to his work, shovelling the loose earth into the mouth of the tunnel and patting it down hard and smooth, and having made all snug and tidy, he trudged off with an air of business that was most comical.

A few mornings after, walking along the same road, I passed large parties of Scarabæi trundling their balls all in the same direction, away from the town. As I returned I discovered the source of their material—a heap of asses' dung by the road side, literally alive with these insects which crawled over it in hundreds and hung over it in a cloud.

The road in the immediate neighbourhood presented a continuous procession of beetles of all sizes, each trundling, either alone or with the assistance of a relative, a pill-like ball which, as it travelled farther and farther from its place of origin, became more and more regular and smooth.

On this one heap were to be seen quite an extensive assortment of these insects—nine or ten species I should think—among which were two species of *Scarabæus* (*S. festivus* and *S. morbillosus*), one species of *Phalops* (*P. vanillus*), and four of *Gymnopleurus* (*G. cerulescens*, *G. azureus*, *G. umbrinus* and *G. fulgidus*). The smaller insects, especially the *Gymnopleuri* were very dainty and beautiful little insects, some, such as *G. fulgidus*, appearing as if wrought in burnished copper, others, as *G. azureus*, and *cerulescens* being clothed in brilliant metallic blue, and they all contrived, notwithstanding their uncleanly occupation, to maintain their glossy coats completely unsullied. The *Gymnopleuri* were exceedingly active insects, flying around with the quick "mazy" flight of the "blue-bottle," and taking to their wings so readily when they were approached that they were quite difficult to capture. The balls made by them varied according to the species, the little *Gymnopleurus*

fulgidus producing one about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, while the other *Gymnopleuri* made balls varying from one-half to three-fourths of an inch in diameter.

The large species of *Scarabæus* (*S. festivus*) interested me greatly. It was an extremely handsome insect with polished, faintly striated elytra which, like the rest of its person, varied in colour from a beautiful golden green to a dull red bronze, and it constructed a ball varying in size from an inch to an inch and a quarter in diameter.

There appears to me to be good reason for believing that this is the true sacred beetle of the ancient Egyptians, a position which has usually been assigned to the dowdy, black-coated *Scarabæus Sacer*. This claim was advanced many years ago by S. O. Westwood on behalf of a species found by M. Caillaud in Sennari, which Westwood named *Ateuchus Egyptiorum*, and which appears to me identical with the one that I am describing; and Westwood's remark that the Egyptians would probably be attracted by this handsome and striking species, especially as it inhabited their ancient home, Sennari, appears to be not without weight. It is important to note, too, that "Ætian and Horapollo both describe the colour of the Sacred Scarabæus as golden.... The Scarabæus wherever depicted on Egyptian monuments is invariably coloured green, not black, although the latter is the colour of the kind common in Egypt and other Southern countries. [1]

[1] C. W. King, "Antique Gems and Rings," 1872.

The Banda road became somewhat more lively towards evening, for at that time the caravans and parties of travellers from the North-west arrived in the vicinity of Bontúku, while from the town long strings of women and boys—mostly slaves, to judge by their face-marks—issued with earthen jars upon their heads, to fetch water from the wells by the roadside. The strangers hurried along to reach the town before the night settled down and often overtook me; and, although they saluted me civilly and passed the usual compliments, they generally stepped off the road and made a little *détour* to avoid coming too near me, while those of them who had never before seen a white man looked askance at me as they passed, with extreme curiosity and no little apprehension. The water-carriers were even more alarmed at my appearance than the strangers, for when I suddenly appeared round a bend in the road many of them put down their water-pots and scampered off among the bushes, where they remained until I was fairly out of sight, and the remainder gave me an exceedingly wide berth.

Not the least agreeable part of the day was the period between our evening meal and the rather indefinite hour for "turning in." Night is generally a pleasant time in the tropics where one is glad to be rid of the sun for a while and to be able to sit out in the open air; and an African night in the Harmattan season is particularly pleasant, for the heat of the day is very soon succeeded by a coolness that is most refreshing.

There was so much to be done in these evenings at Bontúku that an occasional spell of complete idleness came as quite a treat. There was my journal to be posted up, official returns and letters to be written, the residue of the day's collection to be sorted, photographs to be developed and astronomical observations to be made; and when all these duties were disposed of some most agreeable hours were spent sitting at the door of the tent, blowing fragrant clouds from a well-matured pipe and conning the familiar pages of Mungo Park or quaint old Izaak Walton. But there is no rose without a thorn, and these evenings of pleasure and repose had their disagreeable incidents. Apart from the fleas, whose intrusions tended somewhat to disturb the current of one's meditations, the tent harboured various verminous inmates whose presence could not be entirely overlooked even by the most philosophic. There were multitudes of small red ants, for instance, whose carnivorous propensities resulted in a crop of irritable spots on my legs and body, but the most terrible visitor was a large and extremely venomous spider, whose acquaintance we made on the night of our arrival at Bontúku, on which occasion one of the carriers was bitten in the foot so badly that he was disabled for several days. Since then there had been several casualties from the same cause and these generally occurred at night, so we were on the look-out for attacks of this kind.

There is, to most minds, something peculiarly horrible and disgusting about the larger members of the spider and

scorpion family, and I must confess that I generally examined the tent with extreme care before venturing to settle down for the evening; but in spite of my care it was not long before I received a visit. One night, whilst I was sitting reading just inside the tent, I happened to glance at the floor, and as I did so, a dark shadow passed swiftly across it and disappeared under the bed. This put me on the *qui vive*, and I watched for some minutes the place where it had vanished. Presently from this spot the dark shadowy object flashed, with incredible swiftness, across the floor of the tent and vanished in the folds of the fly, but its movement was too rapid for me to distinguish its form. I now drew my feet up on to my chair and slipped off one sandal, which I held in readiness in case the creature should pass near me, and waited for a minute or two. Suddenly the dark form issued from the fly of the tent and sped rapidly towards me: in a moment the sandal came down on the floor, with a sounding smack, and on lifting it I saw the body of a large spider lying on the ground. He was not, indeed, very gigantic, being barely three inches in extreme diameter, but he was a most repulsive object—stalwart, bloated and hairy, with four large curved fangs, each one being the almost exact counterpart of a scorpion's sting and nearly as large, with an oval poison-gland at the base; and from each there exuded a drop of clear colourless venom.

On most nights I set up my telescope and theodolite outside the tent and made observations with a view to

fixing the position of Bontúku, but the weather was in general extremely unfavourable, for the haze or dense clouds obscured the heavens and rendered observations difficult and uncertain. Again and again did I patiently follow a star on its course to within a few degrees of the meridian, only to see it dive behind a cloud, whence it would emerge with a twinkle of derision, having effected its transit under cover.

As I had no chronometer and no sextant with which to observe lunar distance I made various shifts to obtain my longitude, but none of them were successful, and the accompanying map shows only the longitude obtained by dead reckoning.

One night when I had set up the telescope to observe an occultation which was expected to occur about three o'clock in the morning, I determined to while away the earlier hours of the night by rambling about the town, and as I judged by the sound of drums that some festivities were in progress, I lit my lantern and sallied forth with Onitchi. I presently descried the revellers in the Jáman quarter, dancing round a large wood fire, and I bore down upon them; but when they saw my lantern approaching, having never seen anything like it before, they took it to be some kind of supernatural phenomenon and dispersed somewhat hastily. Hereupon Onitchi shouted out an explanation of the apparition, and this encouraged them to return; but they were so much astonished at the lantern that I could not induce them to recommence the dance.

So when I had stood for a quarter of an hour, the centre of an open-mouthed, goggle-eyed, wonder-stricken crowd, I departed; but before going I invited Sei Koffi, the Jáman chief of Bontúku, who had appeared on the scene, to bring his people to my house on the following night and finish the dance.

About half-past eight the next evening Sei Koffi and his friends arrived, and preparations were forthwith made for the entertainment, which was to take place in the square in front of our house. In the middle of this space the Chief's chair was placed, and mine was set beside it. Behind the chairs a party of drummers took up their position and executed little preparatory flourishes on their instruments: a baggage case was brought out by Joe and Onitchi and placed by my side to serve as a table, and on this a few bottles of "square face" and a couple of tumblers were set out to represent the refreshments.

These preparations being completed the dancers formed into an interrupted circle similar in arrangement to that which I have described in speaking of the dance at Odomási: inside the circle the notabilities and aristocrats of the district took their places and, all being ready, the drummers "opened the ball" with a thumping flourish, the dancers broke out into a weird chant and began to sidle round, and the aristocrats of the inner circle commenced to caper with astonishing energy and agility.

The dancers forming the ring all moved sideways in a stooping position, with the legs nearly straight, swaying the

hips and swinging the arms in time with the rhythm of the drums. The ladies who possessed cloths held them elevated, somewhat after the manner of European female dancers, only more so. The dance consisted of several figures, all, as far as I could see, similar in action, but executed to a different chant. The chants or refrains were mostly short, limited in range and set in a minor key, and most of them terminated on the supertonic (see also p. 152): they were rudely harmonized by the addition of a third below, and were repeated over and over again like a Gregorian psalm. This dance differed from the one at Odomási in several particulars. The fetish man, instead of wearing a mask and robe of fibre, was merely enveloped in a long cloth, but like his colleague at Odomási, he carried a switch with which to keep his flock in order. There were few of the curious anklets or bracelets and none of the graceful though barbarous fibre kilts which were so conspicuous in the dance at Odomási, and the dancers swung their empty hands instead of sweeping with the tassel-like brushes that were used at the latter town: in fact the whole affair was much less imposing and characteristic.

I saw a good many of our carriers and domestics joining in the dance, and even the dignified, though hilarious Joseph condescended to skip about on one leg in the "inner circle," holding by the hand an almost stark-naked Bontúkian. When the enthusiasm of the revellers appeared to be flagging, my friend Sei Koffi, by way of furnishing a fresh stimulus, removed his cloth, girded up his loins

and proceeded to pound the biggest drum with extraordinary muscular vigour and no little skill. And in case it should appear extravagant to speak of the skill exhibited in a performance of this kind, I will venture to remark that the drum music of West Africa, like some other native institutions, is somewhat misunderstood by the majority of people, being commonly represented as similar in character to that which accompanies the histrionic exploits of Punch and Judy, or which indicates to the rural sight-seer the whereabouts of the fat lady. This is far from being the case, for many drum performances are extremely complex, and evince, not only considerable technical skill, but also a remarkably correct sense of rhythm. I am, of course, not speaking of the irrelevant hammering of a single tom-tom with which some natives amuse themselves, but of those elaborate concerted performances in which from a dozen to twenty or thirty drums are engaged, each taking its own part and dropping in its note at the appointed place, with unerring accuracy. The West African drum concert is quite different in principle from any other instrumental performance with which I am acquainted, with the exception of that practised by bell-ringers. In most performances in which a number of instrumentalists take part, the whole or the greater part of the instruments are sounded simultaneously; but in these drum concerts each instrument is sounded separately, and every player has his appointed part and has to strike his drum at certain definite intervals, just as change ringers have to pull their ropes in a certain

order of succession. A performance of this kind would be extremely difficult to represent on paper, for not only is each drum tuned to a separate pitch, but each variety has its own peculiar quality of sound: one has a short woody *timbre*, another has a tinkling metallic note, a third is deep and cavernous, while yet another is deep but dull and muffled: many of the smaller ones are provided with an ingenious arrangement by which the player can alter the tension of the drum-head and thus vary the pitch while playing. The effect produced by a number of these instruments played in concert, the notes following one another with such rapidity as to produce an almost continuous sound, is extremely complex and curious, and, when the ear becomes accustomed to the sound and recognises the perfection of the rhythm and the extreme precision of the performance, is not unpleasing.

My impression is that the natives have a much clearer perception of rhythm than of melody, for their tunes are mostly very short and rather crude and ill-defined; and, moreover, they do not always sing them accurately, but are apt to slur and ramble. In their performances on wind or stringed instruments they are very generally content to produce over and over again a short succession of notes too indefinite to be called a tune, the mere twanging of strings or tooting of horns appearing to satisfy them. But most of them, even children, appear to have very clear ideas respecting the intricate performances on the drums with which most festivities are accompanied.

When the dance was concluded the perspiring performers were invited to partake of the official "fire-water," which they did with some diffidence, and the proceedings terminated with a chorus of coughing and expectoration, after which Sei Koffi and his friends departed to their respective homes.

On many nights when I had no special business on hand I used to entice some of the carriers into my tent and encourage them to talk about their personal histories, their countries, native customs and religious beliefs. One of our men, a native of Elmina who was called Flint, knew a great number of fables and folk-stories which he used to recite at my request, to the delight of the little audience that generally collected on these occasions. Most of these stories dealt with the doings of various animals and were full of quaint humour and showed a remarkable knowledge of the habits and characteristics of the beasts which figured in them. One of Flint's stories set forth the adventures of a certain cunning knave named Boáchi, and was very similar to the story given by Thackeray in his "Irish Sketch Book" under the title of "Hudden and Dudden," and which appears in a slightly different form in Lover's "Legends and Stories of Ireland" under the name of "Little Fairly". Another story treated of the Vulture and the Crow, and as this was quite a short one I may as well reproduce it as a sample of West African traditional fiction.

THE CROW AND THE VULTURE

In the beginning the Crow and the Vulture served the same master.

At that time the Vulture was remarkable for his graceful form and handsome plumage, in which he greatly surpassed his fellow-slave the Crow, and, perhaps for this reason, his master regarded him with especial favour and treated him with greater indulgence than any of his other slaves.

But in spite of his advantages the Vulture regarded the Crow with a jealous eye and lost no opportunity of carrying to his master such tales and reports as might tend to his disparagement.

It happened one day that the Crow and the Vulture were journeying together to a neighbouring bush market to buy plantains for their master, and they had nearly reached their destination when they suddenly came upon two boxes lying on the ground by the roadside.

One of these boxes was quite small, but it was very handsome in appearance and was richly ornamented; the other was larger, but was merely a plain wooden box without any embellishment.

As soon as the two birds came in sight of the boxes the Vulture rushed forward and seized the smaller one, and when he had secured it, pointed out the other to his companion, with the remark, "See, brother Crow, there is a box for you also. It is true it is not a very handsome

one, but it will at least be as beautiful as its possessor." At these insolent words the Crow, who was of an humble disposition and was, moreover, quite sensible of his unattractive appearance, was by no means offended, but quietly picked up the box that his greedy companion had allotted to him.

Both now sat down to examine the contents of their boxes. First the Vulture opened his, but no sooner had he raised the lid than he was filled with disappointment and disgust, for it contained nothing but filth and rubbish; but when the Crow looked into his box he saw that it was filled with fine clothing and glossy silks and a snow-white sash. At this sight the Vulture became inflamed with jealous anger and overwhelmed his companion with reproaches and abuse, never ceasing to revile him until they came to the market.

Here they put their case before the old men of the village, who, when they had listened to the story of each, gave judgment in favour of the Crow, saying to the Vulture: "Why do you complain of your fortune? You made your choice and have that which you chose. Be satisfied, therefore, and hold your peace."

But the Vulture refused to be appeased and continued to abuse the Crow until they reached home, when they decided to appeal to their master. But when he had heard them he said to the Vulture: "You have made your choice and it is now too late to repent. Filth and garbage you have chosen and filth and garbage shall henceforth be

your inheritance." Then turning to the Crow, he directed him to clothe himself in the silks and fine clothing which he had found in the box, and when this was done he took the white sash and folded it across the Crow's breast.

And to this day the Crow appears in raiment of silk and wearsu pon his breast a sash of snowy white,[1] while the Vulture goes about in rags and spends his life in the midst of dirt and refuse.

* * *

These fables are known among the Ochi-speaking people as "*annans-asem*" or "spider stories," and are represented as being related by the spider, a creature which is regarded as being gifted with peculiar wisdom.

On the occasion of many of his visits to me, Flint was accompanied by a fellow-townsman named Kwesi Akon.[2]

[1] The Common Crow of West Africa has plumage of glossy black with a broad white band on the breast.

[2] Travellers in the Gold Coast district as well as readers of the literature dealing with that region can hardly fail to notice the continual recurrence in it of such names as Kwesi, Kwaku, Kudju, etc., or such combinations of names as Kwesi Akon, Koffi Mensa, Kudju Essien, etc. The explanation of the prevalence of these names is quite simple, although rather curious. Each child at its birth receives two names, the first of which indicates the day of the week on which it was born, while the second shows the order of its birth and its position in the family. By consulting the following tables it will be seen that our friend Kwesi Akon was born on Sunday and was the ninth child.

Had he been born on Monday his name would have been Kudjo Akon, on Tuesday Kwabina Akon, and so on; while had he been the eighth child he

This man was a fisherman by profession and, like most members of his craft, had a very fair knowledge of a rude kind of astronomy; which is by no means unnecessary, for

would have been Kwési Aochí, if the seventh Kwesi Ashon, and so through all the different numbers.

TABLE OF NAMES FOUNDED ON DAYS OF THE WEEK.

Days of the week.			Corresponding names of persons.			
			Men's names.		Women's names.	
English.	Ochi.	Ga.	Ochi.	Ga.	Ochi.	Ga.
Sunday.	Kwési-da.	Hogba.	Kwési.	Kwáshi.	Ekusúa or Akwássiba.	Akwassía.
Monday.	Ejua-da.	Ju.	Kúdju.	Kúdjo.	Ajúa.	Ajúa.
Tuesday.	Abená-da.	Jufo.	Kwábina.	Kwábina.	Abenába or Ábena.	Ábna.
Wednesday.	Wúku-da.	Sho.	Kwáku.	Kwáku.	Ekúa.	Akúa.
Thursday.	Iyáw-da.	So.	Akwáu.	Kwau.	Ába.	Ába.
Friday.	Éfi-da.	Soha.	Kwófi.	Kofi.	Efúa.	Afía or Afúa.
Saturday.	Memémeda.	Ho.	Kwámina.	Kwamin.	Amba or Ameménewa.	Áma.

TABLE OF NAMES FOUNDED ON NUMBERS AND INDICATING THE ORDER OF BIRTH.

Numerals.			Names. (Ochi and Ga).	
English.	Ochi.	Ga.	Male.	Female.
One.	Ekúrr.	Ekóme, Ekó.	Tétte.	Dede.
Two.	Eblen.	Enyo.	Te-Tê.	Kaw-kaw.
Three.	Abiássa.	Ete.	Ménsa.	Maîsa.
Four.	Annán.	Edfe.	Annán.	Ma-annán.
Five.	Anúm.	Enúmo.	Anúm.	Ma-anúm.
Six.	Essíen.	Ékpa.	Essien.	Ma-essien or Kai.
Seven.	Ashón.	Kpáwo.	Ashon.	Ashon.
Eight.	Aochí.	Kpányo.	Bochwi or Aochí.	Bochwi.
Nine.	Akrón or Akón.	Nehu or Nehúng.	Akrón.	Akron.
Ten.	Edú.	Nyóngma.	Bádu.	Badu.
Eleven.	Dubiákurr.	Nyóngma-ke-ekóme.	Odíko.	Odíko.
Twelve.	Du-ebíen.	Nyóngma-ke-ényo.	Odínyo.	Odínyo.
Thirteen.	Dabiása.	Nyongma-ke-éte.	Odíssan.	Odíssan.
Fourteen.	Edunán.	Nyongma-ke-edfe.	Odinán.	Odinan.
Fifteen.	Edunúm.	Nyongma-ke-enúmo.	Odinúm.	Odinúm.
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

It is, of course, common to meet with names other than those given in the tables. Any remarkable circumstance connected with a child's birth will

the Elmina fishermen are bold voyagers and may often be met with at daybreak entirely out of sight of land.

But apart from his professional knowledge, Kwesi was accounted somewhat of a wise man and was accredited with a knowledge of religious and mystical matters that was usually only to be met with in men of advanced age. His knowledge of the stars was certainly extensive, for he could not only give names to all the principal planets, constellations and fixed stars, but could also tell what seasonal and meteorological conditions prevailed when they were visible.

be commemorated by an added name; for instance, twins receive additional names setting forth the peculiarity of their birth and differentiating them into male and female, elder and younger (*áta panying*, *áta kuma* = elder and younger male twins, *áta panying*, *áta kuma* = elder and younger female twins); again a posthumous child is distinguished by the added name *Dóku* (feminine *Dokúa* or in the *Adangme* dialect *Dokwio*). As the child grows up, some personal peculiarity may give rise to an added name; for instance, the not uncommon combination "Koffi Kuma" means little Koffi or young Koffi (in the event of there being two Koffis in the same family); or a name may be given to indicate the social status, as "Koffi Donkor", meaning Koffi the foreign slave (in this case the "Koffi" would commemorate the day of purchase, not the day of birth).

Then names occur very commonly which can be regarded only as nicknames, although they become, after a time, the recognised names of the persons to whom they are given. An old man who attended the Ketta hospital was named "Adágbato" (*Efe*, shore-crab), while a Hausa soldier who "reported sick" at the same institution, when I asked him his name, gravely informed me that it was "Dambiri" (*Da-n-biri*, *Hausa* "son of a monkey") and so I found it entered on the muster-roll.

Among Hausas and other foreigners in the Gold Coast territories, the names generally indicate the place of birth; as, for example, Mahama Wongára (Mahama the Wongára), Mahamada Bakanu (Mahommed of Kanu) Yusufu Dandaúra (Yusuf or Joseph of Daúra—*Da-n-Daúra* = a son or native of Daúra) etc.

His arrangement of the constellations was similar to but not identical with that of European astronomers, for instance the constellation of Orion—which he called *Mraul*—included the Gemini—which formed *Mraul's* head, while Sirius formed the tail. Aldebaran was named *Etsi* which seemed to include the constellation of Taurus, and to this was appended Capella and Menkalinan as *Etsi's* tail. The Pleiades he denominated *Abirowoh na numba* [1]—the old woman and her children; Canopus he called *Antrofi*, and Arcturus *Antopa*. He evidently understood the difference between planets and fixed stars, for he did not attach the former to any constellation: Jupiter he identified as *Nana Nyánkupong Obúnda eshun*, which is one of the names of the Supreme Being, and Venus he called the wife of the moon—*Cher-cher-piawur*. This association of Venus with the Moon has since struck me as very curious and I have wondered whether the eyesight of the African, which is certainly astonishingly acute, is sufficiently keen to enable him to perceive the phases of this planet.

Kwesi's ideas on religious subjects were not very clear, or at any rate he did not make them very clear to me, although he was rather less vague than most natives with whom I conversed on these matters. He described a number of supernatural beings which seem to fall into certain groups.

[1] Onitchi informed me that in his country, Gara, on the lower Niger, this constellation is called "the hen and chickens," while the belt of Orion is known as "the man, the dog and the antelope"—or "bush beef" as Onitchi expressed it.

First there is the Supreme Being or God, *Onyánkupong Odomankama* or *Nyami*, who appears to be also known by various laudatory names, similar to the "strong names" that are called out by the heralds before the native kings. Examples of these are the names, *Nana Nyankupong-Obuna eshun*—applied also to the planet Jupiter—and *Chweduampong Nyami* (Nyami the All-powerful).

Inferior to *Onyankupong* are the minor deities or spirits, called *Busum* or *Obosum* by the Ochi-speaking peoples, and by the Europeans "fetish". Of these there are two classes, those which are friendly to man—*Busum papa*; and those which are mischievous and hostile—*Busum bon*. These beings are themselves invisible, but are commonly associated with visible objects, especially objects of a remarkable character, such as mountains, rivers, large trees or rocks or stones of peculiar appearance. Examples are to be found in the Pra or Busum-pra river, the Tánno river with its strange gigantic fish, and the Krobo and Adaglu mountains, both of which are solitary mountains rising abruptly out of level plains.

It is by these spirits that the affairs of men are supposed to be controlled, and to them most of the worship and propitiatory offerings are made, the god Onyánkupong receiving comparatively little notice: indeed it may be doubted whether the latter is really an indigenous deity and not an imported article introduced by the white men, who, it must be remembered, have had missionaries on the coast for over three hundred years.

The third variety of supernatural being is the *Abonsam* or demon, which appears to be outwardly indistinguishable from an ordinary man, woman or child. The demoniac nature would seem to be hereditary, for the *Abónsam*, like the poet, is born, not made, and is capable of transmitting his undesirable qualities to his offspring. The child of a demon by a non-demoniac parent does not, however, necessarily inherit the nature of the *Abónsam*, but if it does not, the demon parent calls in a number of other demons, and the devilish crew proceed to drink the child's blood.

During the day the *Abónsam* is, as I have said, indistinguishable from an ordinary human being and goes about engaging in the common avocations of men; but at night, when all the world is asleep, the *Abónsam* rises and removes its skin, when it appears as a pale flabby creature with soft white hair. In this condition it issues forth and becomes invisible excepting that, as it goes along in the darkness, its progress is marked by intermittent flashes of light similar to those emitted by the fire-flies which are so common in West Africa.

The demons of the sea-board countries generally betake themselves at night to the sea-shore and feast upon the carrion-eating crabs which swarm in loathsome multitudes on the shore and in the streets of seaside towns. These orgies they vary by visits to sleeping men, women and children, whose blood they suck, and it is understood that persons who suffer from wasting diseases are thus visited

nightly by the vampire-like *Abónsam* until they die of exhaustion. Similarly children who die of the various forms of marasmus or wasting are said to have been devoured by the *Abónsam.*

When it is clearly ascertained that a house is frequented by one of these demons, the owner proceeds to the local witch-doctor and obtains from him a "medicine" or charm to exorcise it; then at night a fire is lighted in the haunted chamber, and as soon as the embers have burnt clear, the medicine is sprinkled, with certain rites and ceremonies, upon the glowing coals, and as the fumes rise into the polluted air, the *Abónsam* takes its departure, the house is purified and the demon-ridden patient recovers.

Since the *Abónsam* is not ordinarily to be distinguished from genuine human beings, it will frequently happen that some unsuspecting person becomes involved in a matrimonial alliance with one of these objectionable individuals. For some time the state of affairs may pass unnoticed, but sooner of later the demon is detected in its nocturnal expeditions, and then comes the opportunity of the injured spouse.

The *Abónsam* rises, and having removed its skin, lays it down on the mat by the bedside and departs. The husband —or wife, as the case may be—now gets out of bed and fetches some red peppers (capsicum) and grinds them on the pepper-stone into a paste with which he smears the interior of the demon's "exuvium": then he goes back to bed and lies low to wait for further developments.

Presently the *Abónsam*, having finished its infernal orgies, returns and essays to resume its cast-off integument. Needless to say this process is attended with certain inconveniences, and finally the *Abónsam* arriving at the conclusion that life would not be worth living if the body were enveloped in a pepper-plaster, decamps and its spouse is thereafter left in peace.

I enquired of Kwesi if he thought that anybody lived in the moon: to which he replied that it is well known that that satellite is inhabited by three beings, similar to men in appearance, but provided with enormous ears which completely cover their faces. One of them is white and the other two black. He was of opinion that they were created before man; and in reply to my question as to whether they were mortal, he replied that they could hardly be, remarking very logically, "for if they ever died how could they be there still." He would not, however, be positive on the subject, for, as he observed, "dis be upstairs palaver" on which no man should dogmatise.

Another of Kwesi's stories related to the Atuku, twelve man-like beings who are lowered from heaven in a large brass pan suspended by black chains, about two months before the commencement of the rainy season. The pan is dipped into the sea, and when it is filled with water is withdrawn into heaven; but Kwesi could not account for the fact that rain contains no salt.

I observed that a gigantic brass pan figured somewhat largely in West Africa folk-lore. The rather vague accounts

of the Sakrobúndi fetish of Jáman contained references to one, and it is possible that the great brass bowl at Kumasi may be connected with some of these traditions.

Vague and ill-defined as were these stories of Kwesi's, they gave one an insight into the character of these African tribes that was extremely instructive as showing a considerable amount of fancy, imagination and humour; and I could not help reflecting as I listened to the spirited recitals of his native lore by this simple fisherman, that one might go far on the shores of our own country before finding a man of his position gifted with as much intelligence and information.

CHAPTER X

DISCORDS

A PROJECTED Journey—An Affront—Warlike Preparations—The Palaver—The Army arrives—Hostilities averted—Fortification of our House—"Palaver set"—"Sent to Coventry"—"Boycotted" by the Natives—Fees in kind—Short Commons—Charitable Doles—Misdeeds of our Hausas—Kukuruku—A Palaver settled.

WHEN we had been at Bontúku a little over a month we had a disagreement with the chiefs which was of so serious a character as to render the remainder of our stay much less agreeable than it would have otherwise been. The trouble arose under the following circumstances.

Reflecting that we must necessarily remain at Bontúku for a space of at least two months, the Major and I consulted together as to the advisability of making a few tours of exploration in the surrounding country, and we arrived at the conclusion that this would be a very profitable manner in which to spend our time.

The most important and interesting place in the vicinity of Jáman is the large and famous city of Kong, of which numerous Wongára merchants had given us most glowing

accounts, and we had accordingly conceived a strong desire to visit it.

We mentioned our project to the king, asking him if there would be any difficulty in our making the journey, when he assured us that the journey would be attended with great danger and that, moreover, our presence at Kong would be greatly resented by his chiefs and people; and he entreated us to abandon the idea, with so much earnestness that we felt obliged to allow the matter to drop.

Our next project was a visit to the towns of Mo and Banda to the N. E. of Jáman, the former being the town from which Diawúsi had been removed, and the latter the capital of a small state of the same name, now tributary to Jáman, but formerly quite independent and of considerable importance.

Bearing in mind the king's strong disapproval of our intended visit to Kong and surmising that he would probably veto any expeditions that we proposed, we determined to say nothing about this journey and so avoid any objections on his part. But in some way our intentions must have leaked out, for in the morning, just as we were ready to start, with our tents struck and packed and our baggage parcelled out into loads, the king entered the compound, closely followed by Papi, Boitin, Kókobu, Kudjo Kórsono and Sei Koffi.

Ajiman informed us that he had heard we were preparing to set out to Banda, and he must absolutely forbid us to leave Bontúku. He was quite polite, but evidently meant

what he said, and seeing this, we were prepared to give way without any further palaver.

Unfortunately, however, at this point Papi "put in his oar", and gave us to understand that we were not wanted at Banda nor anywhere else, and that we had better remain quietly at Bontúku until the time of our return to the coast, which latter event would, he remarked, be witnessed with great satisfaction by the Jámans in general and himself in particular.

He then made a long rambling and by no means polite speech, becoming very excited and boisterous, and talked a great deal of nonsense, being evidently strongly under the influence of the "square-face" gin with which we had presented him on our arrival.

We told the king that we would certainly give up the idea of going to Banda if he wished it, and he thereupon rose and shook hands, and the procession filed out of the compound, the king leading away the ruffled Papi, growling, muttering and showing his teeth like an aged bloodhound.

There can be no doubt that Papi's conduct on this occasion was most reprehensible, but bearing in mind his quarrelsome, excitable temperament and the quality of the gin that he had evidently been consuming, I was not disposed to attach much importance to the matter.

The Major, however, took the old warrior's rudeness very much to heart and resolved that the honour of the British flag required to be vindicated by some signal act of expiation. He considered that, as the representative of

the British Government, he was entitled to punish a rebellious chief, and he determined that the punishment should take the form of a heavy fine.

For some days no opportunity occurred for making known this decision, but the fifth day after had been appointed by the king as the occasion of a palaver for the discussion of certain matters relating to our treaty. At this palaver the Major resolved to inflict the fine upon Papi.

When the morning of the palaver arrived the Major unfolded his plan of campaign.

It was quite evident that the attempt on the part of a foreigner to inflict a fine on a chief like Papi, the principal fighting chief of the country and the special ally of the powerful Mahommedan faction, would in all probability be the signal for an outbreak of hostilities, and for this contingency preparations (of a not very adequate nature) were made.

The Hausas were mustered in the courtyard and informed that there would probably be some fighting, and detailed directions were given to them as to their conduct in that event. But they appeared, like the horse so graphically described by the patriarch Job, to have "smelt the battle afar off," (perhaps the opening of the ammunition chests had given them the hint) and had made *their* preparations, which appeared in the form of a great variety of long knives, the hilts of which peeped out of their sleeves and above their waistbands.

Forty rounds of ball ammunition were served out to

each man, and this was at once loosened in the pouches, so that the force was prepared to commence business on the shortest notice.

As an additional precaution the rocket-trough was mounted on the roof of the house, and the gunner-sergeant in charge was instructed to fire rockets into the crowd as soon as the "commence firing" was sounded by the bugler.

These arrangements being completed, we set out for the palaver ground. When we arrived, the king and chiefs Papi, Boitin and Kókobu had already taken their places, and in striking contrast to our own bellicose array, they were attended by only a few unarmed followers.

The general business of the palaver went off with more than usual smoothness, and the king and chiefs were remarkably gracious and cordial in their manner, desiring, I suppose, to neutralize the bad impression produced on us by Papi's discourteous behaviour on the previous occasion.

When the matter of the treaty had been disposed of, the king gave us a few explanations of the laws of the country, which for the most part seemed to be of a very simple and common-sense kind.

When this was concluded, the king signified that the palaver was ended and gave us our dismissal in the usual way, preparing at the same time to take his departure.

Here, however, the Major intervened with the remark that he had one more item of business to settle, and he then ordered Papi to come and stand before him.

Papi rose from his seat and was beginning to advance

when the king peremptorily commanded him to sit down, and turning to the Major, said that he would settle that palaver himself.

This the Major would not agree to. He explained to Ajiman that Papi had insulted the British officers who were sent to his country and that in so doing he had insulted the Government which sent them, and in fact had virtually put an affront upon the Queen who was at the head of that Government. To show Papi the magnitude of his offence he intended to make him pay a fine of gold dust of the value of fifty pounds, and he again ordered Papi to come forward, while Ajiman again commanded that delinquent to remain where he was, being evidently very suspicious of the Major's intentions. Then the old king rose from his seat, and kneeling down, placed his hands upon the Major's feet and entreated him to forgive Papi who, he declared, was drunk at the time that he committed the offence, but who, when in his sound senses, would not think of behaving disrespectfully to a British officer. The Major, however, was deaf to his entreaties, although they were several times repeated, and ordered Futa with four Hausas to go and seize Papi and bring him to the place where we were sitting.

This was the signal for a general uproar. The natives with one accord crowded round Papi, forming a dense mass which Futa and his men were quite unable to penetrate: and I then observed that several of them had muskets. A party of Wongáras who had accompanied Papi now made

off to get weapons and reinforcements, and although the Hausas chased and endeavoured to intercept them, they eventually got away and went scampering off towards the town, yelling like Bedlamites.

The king now again besought the Major to accept his apologies on behalf of Papi, but the Major was obdurate and insisted that the offender should come and stand before him and receive his sentence, which the king absolutely refused to allow.

In a surprisingly short space of time a large body of Mahommedans armed with spears and muskets was seen approaching from the direction of the town, and at their head we could make out the form of Ali, borne aloft in his litter and preceded by a man carrying a red flag. They advanced rapidly, with a great deal of shouting and flourishing of spears and other menacing gestures. Almost at the same time two other bodies of armed men made their appearance on the opposite side of the plain and began to converge upon our position.

These were evidently part of the regular army of Jáman, for they were all armed alike and they advanced with the steady business-like air of disciplined troops, in close single file—the usual formation in West Africa by reason of the narrowness of the paths—with their long muskets held perpendicularly at the shoulder.

As these three bodies of troops steadily but rapidly closed in on us, things began to assume an extremely serious and threatening aspect, observing which the king

and Boitin rushed out on opposite sides and motioned to them to keep away, whereupon they halted; but the Mahommedans continued to flourish their spears and muskets, and shout, and shake their fists at us.

At this moment I chanced to look round at the Hausas, and, to my astonishment and dismay, caught them making active preparations to take the offensive on their own account.

We had left them drawn up two deep, behind our chairs, and of course facing towards us, with bayonets fixed and arms at the "order." When I looked round they were facing in all directions, had unfixed their bayonets and come to the "ready," and were ramming in the cartridges, entirely oblivious of the presence of their officers and of the fact that no orders had been given. In a few moments more they would have opened fire, in which case there is little doubt that our entire party, hopelessly outnumbered as we were, would have been annihilated.

When the Hausas had been compelled to reluctantly unload and refix their bayonets, I endeavoured to penetrate the crowd that surrounded Papi, hoping to induce him to come forward and enable us to end the palaver without ignominiously "caving in"; but his followers would not allow me to come near him, and one member of the bodyguard, finding that I persisted in my endeavours despite his pantomimic remonstrances, enforced his views by pointing his musket at my head, a hint which I felt it would be unwise to ignore. Moreover, at this juncture Boitin and

Kókobu came up, and taking me by the arms, gently but firmly led me away from Papi's dangerous vicinity.

A fight now seemed unavoidable as the Mussulmans were again advancing and were within pistol-shot of us. Fortunately, however, the king now volunteered to pay any fine that might be imposed, and the Major considered it wise to accept this offer and abandon his idea of passing sentence on Papi in person. So the fine was fixed at fifty pounds sterling, and the palaver was then declared to be at an end.

Even then we should not have been suffered to leave the field but for the solicitude for our safety shown by the king and chiefs, the former of whom insisted on walking back between the Major and me at the head of our men, while Boitin and Kókobu hovered about the rear of our party to ward off any attack that might be made in that direction.

Altogether our return through the town to our quarters was a sorry and ignominious retreat, and contrasted absurdly enough with the bumptious aggressiveness of our manner an hour previously.

As we marched through the streets under the protection of Ajiman in front and the chiefs behind, the rabble poured out of every alley to jeer at us as we passed; the Wongáras followed us the whole of the way challenging us with shouts and gestures of defiance; while the housetops were crowded with women and children who greeted us with hoots and yells and other signs of derision.

Having seen us safely inside our house the king and chiefs departed, wishing us a somewhat cool adieu, and forthwith an immense multitude of natives collected in front of the gate of the compound, and for several hours kept up a hubbub that nearly deafened us.

As soon as we were fairly inside the compound the Major evolved a new set of tactics. Crowbars and other similar implements were produced, and fatigue parties set to bore loopholes through the walls, so that before night a range of holes, about three inches in diameter and about four feet from the ground, ran completely round the outside walls. While this work was in progress a message was brought from the king asking us to desist.

The only result of this proceeding that I was able to discover besides increasing the irritation of the natives (who were quite mystified as to its object), was that the latter were provided with a convenient and ready means of observing our movements at their leisure, an opportunity of which I noticed they were not slow to avail themselves, for when I looked out through any of the loopholes I almost invariably encountered an eye at the other side; but the injury inflicted on the walls was strongly objected to by our landlord, who sent in a polite message to the effect that a claim for "dilapidations" would be made.

I do not think that there was ever any reason to expect that an attack would be made upon our house, seeing what pains had been taken by the king and chiefs to protect us; and, moreover, as we had neither provisions nor water,

we should have been quite unable to stand a siege for twenty-four hours.

On the following morning the king's messengers came to us with a conciliatory message; and we shortly after heard that a palaver had been held to discuss our doings. According to the report that reached us, Papi, Boitin and Kókobu were in favour of repudiating the fine and allowing us to exact it by force if we could; but the king and Edu Kudju thought it best to pay and avoid further unpleasantness, and to this the others eventually agreed.

The final stage of the business was reached the next day when a second palaver was held to enquire into the objects of the loopholes which we had made in our walls. This palaver the Major attended in person (while the Hausas remained inside the compound in readiness to go to his assistance if necessary), and the perfectly friendly treatment that he received showed us that peaceful relations could be considered as re-established.

And now that the trouble was over it was most singular to observe how quickly and completely the passions of these boisterous, impulsive people subsided, like the fierce tornadoes of their own climate, which roar and bluster and deluge the earth for half an hour and then pass away, giving place at once to calm and sunshine.

Four or five days after the dispute on the plain I recommenced my rambles about the town and the surrounding country, and wherever I encountered the natives I met with nothing but civility.

The very men who, but a few days before, had pursued us to our gates, with shouts of defiance and gestures of menace, now, when I met them in the market or on the country roads, greeted me with a pleasant smile and a courteous "Sanu!" [1] Our Wongára friends, too, many of whom had rallied round Ali's red flag to march against us, now sauntered into the compound or lounged in the porch as if nothing had ever occurred to disturb our good fellowship.

Yet it was easy to see that our position was not quite the same as before the quarrel. The common people bore us no ill-will nor did the chiefs openly show any resentment; but the king discontinued his visits to our house, and

[1] In every part of West Africa that I visited, certain forms of salutation existed, the wording of which was more or less definitely fixed by custom. These greetings took a form somewhat analogous to the responses in our church services, and in all the different nations were curiously similar in their general nature, as a few examples will show. They were most generally used when two travellers or caravans passed on the road and when travellers entered a town or village.

In Hausa, which is *par excellence* the traveller's language in West Africa, being understood in most of the countries from the Gold Coast to near the Mediterranean, the form is somewhat as follows:— "*Sanu-sanu!*" *Sanu* is generally understood to mean "softly" or "slowly" (a word is duplicated in Hausa to give emphasis as "*Kadan*"—"small", "*Kadan-kadan*"—"very small"; "*yi daria*" to laugh, "*yi daria-daria*" to laugh immoderately), in which case this greeting would mean "Gently! don't hurry!" But it appears to me that "steadily" would more correctly indicate its meaning in this case, as also in the caravan proverb "*Tafia sanu ko na nesa*"—"Walk *steadily* though the way be long." The proper reply to this is "*Sanu kadai*", which is rather idiomatic, "*kadai*" being literally "only" or "alone". Then follows a series of questions usually beginning "*Kaka gidda?*"—"How is your house?" *i.e.*, your establishment in general, and going on "*Kaka mata?*" "*Kaka dia?*" "*Kaka sariki?*"—"How is your wife?" "How are the children?"

presently left Bontúku without coming to wish us "good-bye!" The chiefs too gave us much less of their society, and one by one returned to their respective towns without paying us a farewell visit. Even the old Limámu, although still kind and courteous in his manner, had apparently rather lost confidence in us, and did not renew his invitation to me to attend the service in the mosque.

The feeling of distrust with which the natives now regarded us, very soon became a source of considerable inconvenience, for our domestics found it more and more difficult to induce the market people to sell them even the common necessaries of life, and as our stores were mostly used up, we were soon reduced to exceedingly short commons. I could never quite understand the reason of this "boycotting" policy

"How is the King?" etc., each question receiving its appropriate answer.

Among the E-fe-speaking races of Krepi, Anglaw, Dahome, etc., the greetings are complex and prolonged, and judging by the readiness with which the "responses" are made, follow closely a traditional form with little variation.

The greeting usually commences by one party making "kind enquiries" concerning the townspeople of the other; then follow a series of questions and answers in regular appointed order, at the conclusion of which the other party commences and goes through the same form.

As an example, let us suppose a party of natives from Ketta, in Anglaw, to meet a party from the neighbouring village of Adaffia. The mode of greeting, supposing the Adaffias to take the initiative, would be somewhat as follows:—

"Ketta tawdi?"

"Elle."

"Deviorda!"

"Endo."

"S'rawda."

"Elletaw," etc.

The Ketta people would return the greeting in the same manner:—

on the part of the townspeople, for I think they felt no active dislike to us. Of course our presence, or rather the presence of our armed followers, was an annoyance to them, partly by reason of its preventing many of the caravans from visiting the town and thus putting a stop to trade, and partly from the uncertainty which existed as to our intentions; but I am strongly inclined to think that the hostility which was shown to us was entirely caused by the conduct of our followers and especially that of the Hausa escort, which, so far from being a protection to us, was a continual source of danger and inconvenience.

It was about this time that I discovered the misdeeds of Joe and Onitchi in the matters of blackmailing patients,

"Adaffia tawdi," etc. (This is what the words sounded like, but I will not guarantee their accuracy, which, however, is not material.)

If the parties actually meet they usually hold one another by the hand while exchanging these verbal courtesies, and at each question and response snap the middle finger and thumb as is always done in shaking hands in the E-fe districts. The above is the form commonly used on the road, but when chiefs or elders meet, from different towns, the "Catechism" is prolonged to an extraordinary degree, and is gabbled off with surprising rapidity.

I cannot give a reliable translation of these E-fe salutations, as I was quite unacquainted with the language, and the natives knew so little English that their explanations were quite unintelligible.

In Ga (Accra) the ordinary salutation in the streets "*O ya juba?*" is very like our "How do you do?" and means literally "Do you go well?" to which the ordinary reply is "*En!*" pronounced (as Burton would say) "nanny-goat fashion," "*Mi ya juba?*"—"Yes! I go well."

But the Gas have also in common with the Andangmes a road or caravan greeting which runs somewhat thus:—

"*Ai ko!*" (which may be freely translated "Go it!").

"*I-ai!*" (which may be similarly translated "Right you are!").

Then follows a series of questions and answers variable according to circumstances, winding up with "*bleo*"—"softly".

and the "fees" that I exacted from persons who came to consult me, at first greatly relieved our distress, and even furnished a reserve store, for I stipulated that each person seeking advice from me should bring as an offering, according to his means, either a fowl, a yam, a measure of maize-meal or the same quantity of beans, and accordingly every morning a party of patients appeared at our gate each with his offering under his arm.

On these contributions we largely subsisted for some time, and as they came in at first faster than we consumed them the surplus yams and beans were stored in the "library" until we found ourselves the possessors of quite a substantial reserve. But by-and-by the number of patients began to fall off, and our reserve store commenced to dwindle, indeed it diminished so rapidly that my suspicions were aroused and I kept a watch on the store-room, with the result that I caught the perfidious Onitchi one evening sneaking out with a yam in his hand. This evidence of his incorrigible dishonesty was too much for my patience, and I forthwith dismissed him from his post as my orderly, and banished him from our compound.

About this time (10th March) the Major started on a journey to the adjacent town of Bori, and I was left in charge at Bontúku. The food supply question had now become so urgent that I considered it necessary to take some decided measures to avoid actual starvation. My stock of yams was quite exhausted and the only food that I could obtain was a coarse meal of maize which was full

of particles of gravel. This meal was made into a kind of porridge, but as I had no sugar or other flavouring material, it was most insipid and unsavoury, and the gritty particles with which it was filled rendered it nauseous and disgusting, A Mahommedan acquaintance of mine named Maka, visited me one day when I was taking my mid-day meal, and observing the little relish with which I consumed the uninviting mess, remarked that this was indeed poor fare for a white man. In the evening Maka called again, bringing me a pot of wild honey, a brown treacly fluid filled with dead bees and other insects, and having a taste somewhat like molasses, with which, after straining it through a cloth, I imparted some degree of flavour to my porridge.

For some time I had suspected that the Hausas were doing no good to our reputation among the townspeople, for various reports had reached me from time to time of collisions and quarrels between them and the followers of the Wongára chief Ali. So one morning when Sidichi, Salifu and Maka paid me a visit I asked them what they knew about the matter. Thus invited they expressed their opinions of the Hausas in very plain and far from complimentary language and furnished me with a long catalogue of the misdeeds of our *masu-bindiga* (soldiers). It appeared that the trouble between our Hausas and Ali's people arose thus:—A party of the former stole a bullock belonging to Ali and drove it into the bush, where they killed it, and were proceeding to skin it when they were disturbed by

some of Ali's men, and after a fight were driven off to the barracks. The next time the Hausas made their appearance in the town they were set upon by the Wongáras and beaten, and more or less chronic hostility had since then continued. On hearing this, I called on Ali without delay and had a long conference with him on the subject. He fully confirmed the statements of Sidichi and the others, and told me that two bullocks and sundry goats of his had been stolen and killed by the Hausas. He stated that it was in consequence of a report spread by the Hausas that we intended to kill him and Papi, that he marched out against us with his armed men on the day of the palaver; but I do not think this statement was correct.

From Ali I proceeded to the Limámu, who fully bore out the assertions of the former, and added that quarrels between the Hausas and the townspeople were of almost daily occurrence, being usually occasioned by thefts committed by the former. I expressed my extreme regret at this state of things and enquired why the matter had not been brought to my notice or that of the Major, to which the Limámu replied that he thought we knew all about it. We then entered into a mutual arrangement to the effect that any of my men committing offences of any kind in the town should be brought before me for punishment, and any of the townspeople committing trespasses against me or my followers should, in the same manner, be charged by me before the Limámu.

Shortly after the dismissal of Onitchi I appointed an

orderly to succeed him, and my selection fell upon a certain lance-corporal who rejoiced in the rather striking name of Kukuruku. To do full justice to this most euphonious name one ought to spell it in the old-fashioned Mungo Parkian or hydrographical style—Kookoorookoo, but even this would fail to convey its musical possibilities as developed by the Commissioner's servant John, who used to mouth it in a way that filled the bystanders with joy and the unhappy Kukuruku with rage. On one occasion, indeed, his fury was beyond expression by words and he commenced active hostilities, and the "mill" that ensued would have rejoiced the hearts of frequenters of the "Brown Bear".

John was a long and weedy Fanti of extremely clerical aspect, who might have passed for a native minister, while Kukuruku was a squat, rather obese, punchy little man with a broad round face on which was a ferocious grin. The proceedings opened by both parties puffing out their cheeks and charging one another with arms extended somewhat in the fashion of the lion and the unicorn on the royal coat of arms: then followed a series of rather indiscriminating pummellings, in the course of which the authorities intervened, so that I am spared the pain of recording bloodshed.

To return to Kukuruku. A few days before our departure from Bontúku he appeared one morning at the door of my tent with a woman who appeared to be a Hausa slave. This lady, he informed me, he had "adopted" and he

asked my permission to take her as his wife. Suspecting that there was something behind this request, I enquired into the particulars of the case. Kukuruku's scanty stock of English did not permit of elegant circumlocution, so his statement was concise and to the point.

"I find dis woman," he explained, "in the town. He like me. I like him. Finish."

A native generally winds up an explanatory or argumentative statement with some such expression as "finish" or "palaver set," in accordance with the usages of native languages in which the end of a statement is so marked: as for instance in Kukuruku's native tongue, Hausa, in which the end of a story or explanation is indicated by "Ya kare," "It is finished," the equivalent of the Euclidean "Q. E. D."

But in Kukuruku's case it was not finished by any means, for it appeared that a Wongára man from Kong had appeared on the scene and claimed the woman as his slave. This put a new complexion on the matter, and I had to tell the bridegroom elect that I could not consent to his marriage until I had seen the Limámu on the subject. I accordingly took him and the lady forthwith to the Limámu's house and explained the matter to the old gentleman, who at once sent for the claimant and his witnesses, and said he would hear the case as soon as all the parties were present. In about a quarter of an hour they arrived and the court was arranged for the hearing in the open space outside the house. On one side stood Kukuruku with the

lady of his choice, and on the other the claimant, a voluble Wongára, with a number of witnesses. The Limámu now called upon the woman to make her statement, to which he listened attentively, and then the claimant was directed to state his case. When this had been done, the Limámu called the witnesses brought forward by the claimant and examined them at length: then he asked the claimant a number of questions, and having patiently listened to the rather prolix replies, he gave his judgment, which was to the effect that the Wongára had failed to satisfactorily establish his claim and that the woman was consequently free to go where she pleased. When this decision was given the Wongára expectorated on the ground and abruptly departed, while Kukuruku and his betrothed went off hand in hand with beaming faces. The proceedings in this native court were as orderly and regular as those of a Commissioner's Court on the Coast, and I observed that there seemed to be not the least question as to the finality of the decision.

It was extremely fortunate that the arrangement referred to above was made between the Limámu and me, for it was the means of averting a serious riot a few days after. Early in the morning I was awakened by Joe rushing into my tent to tell me that "some palaver come," and on going to the gate I found a crowd of excited Wongáras who had brought a dead goat and one of our drummer boys who was stated to have been concerned with some other Hausas, who had escaped, in killing it. He had been

caught red-handed and taken before the Limámu, who at once referred the complainants to me.

The theft was not denied, so I paid the owner the price of the goat and placed the drummer under arrest: and very soon other information was forthcoming which led me to arrest six of the Hausas and two more drummers. In the evening I held a preliminary enquiry when two of the Hausas admitted the correctness of the charges against them.

These events very soon became noised abroad in the town, and as soon as the natives understood that they could obtain redress for their grievances their attitude became more friendly and the difficulty of obtaining provisions was greatly reduced, and my meagre diet of maize-meal received various welcome additions.

CHAPTER XI

MOUNT KNUTSFORD

CURIOUS appearance of the Mountain—Orchard-like Country—Abundance of Earth-Worms—A Native Hunter—Slaves—Native Agriculture—Ascent of the Mountain—View from the Summit—Flat Top of the Mountain—Geological Structure of the Mountain.

IN the course of my rambles around Bontúku I had frequently noticed a somewhat conspicuous solitary mountain of no great altitude, lying due north of the town, from many parts of which it was visible. To an explorer bent on the construction of a map, any kind of hill or rising ground is of interest, partly from the extensive view it affords and the opportunity it furnishes of taking distant bearings, and partly from the fact that it is itself a land mark visible for a considerable distance in various directions. But this little mountain, besides the assistance it promised in surveying operations, possessed a peculiarity which whetted my curiosity at the time, and which I am to this day quite unable to explain; for on clear days, when the sun was shining upon it, there appeared near its summit what looked in the distance like a large pyramid of reddish stone.

This appearance was noted by the Major as well as by me, and we frequently discussed the "Pyramid Hill", as we named it, and speculated as to the nature of the structure built upon it; and we determined to take an early opportunity of making an exploratory visit, hoping to encounter some remains that might throw some new light on the ethnology of the district.

About the middle of February an opportunity occurred, and having made overnight such simple preparations for the journey as seemed necessary, we made the start one morning at about eight o'clock.

The day was well aired when our little party got under way, and the business of the town was already in full swing. Strings of country people, carrying large baskets and calabashes of produce on their heads, were hurrying into the city through the narrow field paths. Crowds of Wongáras, looking very smart in their bright blue gowns and jaunty cotton caps, were swaggering about the streets, chattering gaily and mixing a little business with a great deal of amusement, while here and there a tall stately Hausa, attired in handsome embroidered gown and trousers, his head covered with a neatly folded turban, his face half veiled by the ghostly *litham*, and his feet shod with bright yellow slippers, stalked slowly towards the market, followed by a line of slaves bearing merchandise. As I passed out on to some rising ground beyond, I paused to look back on to the city. The slanting rays of the morning sun fell on its roofs, its long walls, its spires and its mul-

titudinous pinnacles, imparting to it an appearance of elegance and order that made it difficult to realize that I was in the heart of barbarous Africa.

Our party now entered a tract of country the features of which altered but little during the first hour's journey. Its general character was park-like and fairly open, the actual surface being quite bare of vegetation at this time of year, although in the rainy season it is covered with tall coarse grass. It was pretty thickly wooded, in some places very thickly, while in others openings occurred in which the country could be seen for several hundred yards. The trees were mostly small and rather slender, consisting largely of shea butter (Bassia) and a kind of wild plum, and were almost leafless. Taken as a whole, the country strongly reminded me of an English orchard in early winter, and the white barks which characterised most of the trees increased the resemblance. Now and then, however, we met with one of the large forest trees, and I was much interested to observe that in all cases their roots were here almost completely covered by the soil, as was also the case with the smaller trees.

The surface soil was a fine yellowish sandy loam, baked hard by the sun, and one feature of it particularly attracted my attention. This was the number of worm-casts which entirely covered the surface. They were of two kinds: one cylindrical and apparently thrown up in a semi-solid state, and the other hemispherical, evidently thrown up in quite a liquid condition. These latter were so numerous

that the ground had almost the appearance of a pebbly beach.

The abundance of earth-worms which these casts imply, is of considerable interest in view of the fact that Drummond, in his admirable description of a similar tract of country on the eastern side of the continent, speaks of that country as being apparently destitute of earth-worms; and certainly had they been at all numerous, they would not have escaped the notice of so close an observer. But it is difficult to account for the difference in this respect between the two sides of the continent, for Drummond's description of the Shiré district makes it clear that the country which he describes is in other respects remarkably similar to that of which I am writing.

About nine o'clock we reached a little village called Gruinsi, consisting of about half a dozen mud huts, and having a population of about thirty dirty uncivil ragamuffins. Here we determined to breakfast and lay in stores, in the shape of yams and fowls, for the rest of the day. We had great difficulty in persuading the natives to sell us these commodities, although they admitted that they raised them for the market; but they at last consented, and then gathered round to see us eat our breakfast. I was much diverted by the "get up" of an elderly hunter who stood among the crowd watching us. This person, who carried over his shoulder (stock uppermost) a long flint-lock Dane gun, wore upon his head a tall conical deerskin cap shaped like a candle extinguisher, surmounted by a pair

of curved antelope horns. He was a very spare old man with a keen eager face and a long aquiline nose, very unlike the typical negro. While we were at breakfast we heard a great uproar in the village, and presently a noisy, swaggering Mahommedan in a broad-brimmed sun hat came up and began most officiously to disperse the crowd. Soon after his followers made their appearance, leading two slaves —tall, muscular fellows, but very silent and sulky, evidently a good deal "down on their luck"—who were coupled by a stout rope fastened round their necks. It appeared that they were being taken to a market not far from Bontúku, where they would be sold; and on asking their value, I was told by my followers (who were intensely disgusted at not being allowed to "trade") that they were worth about thirty thousand cowries (thirty shillings) each.

NATIVE HUNTER, GRUINSI.

At ten o'clock we resumed our march, and ten minutes after leaving the village we passed through extensive yam plantations. Large level tracts had been very thoroughly cleared, and the rich loam arranged in long lines of conical heaps about 18 inches high. The plants were not yet above ground, but each heap of earth was surmounted by a small bundle of grass to protect them from the sun when they sprouted. As we proceeded towards the hill the soil gradually changed its character, assuming the red colour so familiar on the coast and in Ashanti. This red varied from

a deep madder or laky brown to the more common pinky red. Where the former colour prevailed, the soil was more altered by atmospheric agencies, as evidenced by its finer texture and greater cohesiveness; where the latter colour predominated, the soil approached more nearly the characters of the rock from which it was derived, and in many cases consisted entirely of small fragments of the unaltered rock, forming a material like brick rubbish intermixed with larger clinker-like masses of ferruginous rock. About one hour from our destination we passed through a small village of circular huts with conical thatched roofs, and then, crossing a stream, passed through a belt of somewhat thick wood, on emerging from which we were in full view of the hill. We now descended about 50 feet and crossed a small wooded hollow, after which we began to ascend, and shortly after crossed a dry watercourse. The bed of this was composed of a close, hard, ferruginous sandstone, worn quite smooth, and in the banks was a little dark coloured, fine grained granite. About twenty minutes after we again fell in with this watercourse, which was here a gully some 20 feet deep with very precipitous sides.

Skirting the brink of the gully we presently reached an open space, in the centre of which stood a small hut, used apparently as a temporary granary, for in it we found a number of large bags of plaited grass filled with two kinds of small white beans, of which I pocketed some for future examination. Close by were plantations of these beans, both kinds being little trees about

five feet to seven feet high, looking something like young Italian poplars. The plantation seemed very well cared for, each little tree occupying a conical heap of earth.

Leaving the clearing we continued the ascent along a narrow, steep, rugged path for about twenty minutes, when, reaching an open spot which was shaded by one or two trees, we called a halt for rest and refreshment.

We were a good deal fatigued by our walk and climb, but our followers were much more so. I noticed throughout the whole of my journey, extending over nearly five months, that whereas on the level the natives could travel great distances even while carrying heavy burdens, any considerable ascent fatigued them greatly, while for mountain climbing they were nearly useless. This was especially the case with the Hausas.

After lunch the party rested for some time, and I filled up this interval by crawling about in the undergrowth searching for mollusca, my search being rewarded by the discovery of twelve species new to me. The soil here was a dark reddish brown, and contained a good deal of organic matter, but masses of a highly ferruginous sandstone, having in some cases a tuberculated appearance, were scattered plentifully around.

After our rest we continued to ascend the path and soon reached a small summit separated from the main body of the hill by a deep notch. From this point the view was very striking and beautiful, notwithstanding the fact that its more distant features were hidden by the

harmattan haze. To the south stretched the large and fertile valley in which Bontúku stands, appearing from this height a mass of verdure as far as the eye could reach, perfectly flat and covered with trees. In the nearer parts of the landscape all its details could be clearly made out; farther away the trees appeared to be rising out of a level sea of mist; while in the distance all forms were blended and softened, their indefiniteness and mystery giving a special charm to the prospect. The hills which enclose the Bontúku valley to the south-west could not be seen, but of the unexplored country lying to the north and north-west a fairly good view was obtained.

Here were several ranges of hills of no great altitude and the view was limited to the north-west by two remarkable plateaux, one behind the other, of considerable length, and perfectly level along the top. Their altitude was probably about the same as that of the hill upon which I stood.

The path now descended the hillside into the valley beyond, so the remainder of our climb had to be performed through the thick bush which clothed the sides of the hill.

After half an hour's scrambling up the steep surface, dragging ourselves up by the high bushes, we suddenly emerged, much scratched, bedraggled, and out of breath, on to a flat area which formed the extreme summit of the hill.

This space, which on rough measurement with the sextant, I found to be about eight thousand square yards in extent,

presented a very remarkable appearance. In the first place it was absolutely level, although the sides leading up to it were extremely precipitous, and in the second place it was almost completely bare with the exception of a narrow fringe of vegetation at its extreme margin, and was covered with immense numbers of blocks of the ferruginous rock described above, varying in size from one inch to twelve feet in diameter, which were thickly but irregularly scattered about the surface. The soil between the masses of rock was a fine soft red loam and in this a few lilies and orchids grew. The altitude of this area above the plain was 1,400 feet.

During our ascent the mist had greatly increased, and I was much disappointed to find that I could see little from this elevation but the plain immediately below, and I was thus unable to take the bearings, as I had hoped, of the hills of the horse-shoe range.

I now determined to examine the pyramid that had so strongly stimulated my curiosity, and to this end I proceeded to the portion of the mountain where I judged it to be situated. But, to my astonishment and disgust, neither there nor in any other place was there to be seen a vestige of any such structure; and as all parts of the mountain were visible from the different sides of the summit, it was obviously impossible for such an object, had it existed, to have been overlooked.

I was therefore forced to the conclusion that the pyramid was an optical illusion, produced, probably, by the

light falling upon some bare patch of rock on the mountain side.

Having fairly satisfied myself that the especial object of the day's journey was a myth, I endeavoured to allay my disappointment by making a sketch of the curious level area at the summit; and meanwhile Nyami, who had accompanied me as Joe's deputy, lit a fire and prepared tea. As no bread had been brought, the resourceful Nyami occupied the time while the kettle was boiling, in cutting some slices of yam which, having impaled on pointed sticks, he proceeded to toast, and the appearance of these dainties was most inviting, for to the eye they closely resembled muffins, but their other physical properties were more suggestive of burnt cork. Nevertheless the meal was refreshing and even festive, and we arose from it invigorated and ready for the long journey home. The instruments and cooking untensils being packed, we now turned our faces southward and scrambled down the hillside, reaching the plain below just as daylight was merging into moonlight.

The tramp home under the brilliant moon, with Canopus twinkling before us in the southern sky and guiding us on our way, was very delightful. Our followers, cheerful though rather tired, chanted snatches of their native music, while their two leaders, pipe in mouth, strode on, in silent enjoyment of the fragrant weed that "wasted its sweetness on the desert air".

Dark forms glided away into the mist as we invaded the haunts of sleeping antelope, or broke rudely in upon

the nocturnal revels of civets and spotted genets; goat-suckers flashed fitfully before our faces, and bats flapped around us with shrill squeaks; great lammellicorn beetles lumbered heavily through the misty air with a loud droning hum; while in the distance the hollow, low-pitched, moaning cry of the hyæna mingled at rarer intervals with the weird screams of the potto.

On we trudged across moonlit openings, through ghostly woodland, past the now silent villages whose fires were smouldering a dull red, until about midnight we entered the empty streets of Bontúku, and presently heard the rattle of arms and the sharply-spoken challenge of the sentry at the gate of our quarters.

It may be well here to say a few words about the little mountain which I have named (after the late Secretary of State for the Colonies) Mount Knutsford. This appears to be an outlier of an extensive plateau lying to the north and north-west, the escarpment of which could be seen from its summit. The remarkable flatness of the latter, together with the similar flatness of the tops of the neighbouring plateaux, is a feature of considerable interest and may, I think, be thus accounted for.

Over nearly the whole of Ashanti and Jáman the surface is formed by alternate outcrops of two sandstones of very different characters, the uppermost being a soft rock, light buff in colour, destitute of iron, and easily eroded by atmospheric agencies; the other being red in colour (very similar to the New Red Sandstone), hard, strongly impreg-

THE RETURN FROM MOUNT KNUTSFORD

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nated with oxide of iron, containing hard masses of almost pure oxide, and much more resistant to the action of the atmosphere. Now the body of Mount Knutsford is composed of the latter rock, which was evidently formerly covered by strata of the softer yellow stone. These strata have been removed by atmospheric erosion, the detritus having accumulated in the valley of Bontúku, the soil of which is clearly derived from the non-ferruginous rock. The flat area, therefore, at the summit of the mountain is the upper surface of the red sandstone and plane of junction of the two rocks.

Around the base of the mountain the yellow soil is overlaid by a red soil derived from the red sandstone of the mountain, the existence of the subjacent yellow debris being proved by the occurrence of yellow ant-hills on the red surface. In some parts of the Bontúku valley (as elsewhere in Jáman and North Ashanti) the reverse of this condition occurs, red ant-hills derived from the underlying ferruginous rock, appearing on a surface of yellow loam.

So at the foot of Mount Knutsford we should meet, from above downwards, with three varieties of rock: on the surface we should find a red loamy soil, formed by the denudation of the mountain as it now stands; below this we should meet with a layer of yellow soil derived from the strata which formerly occupied the summit; and beneath this we should come down upon the solid red sandstone, continuous with the body of the mountain.

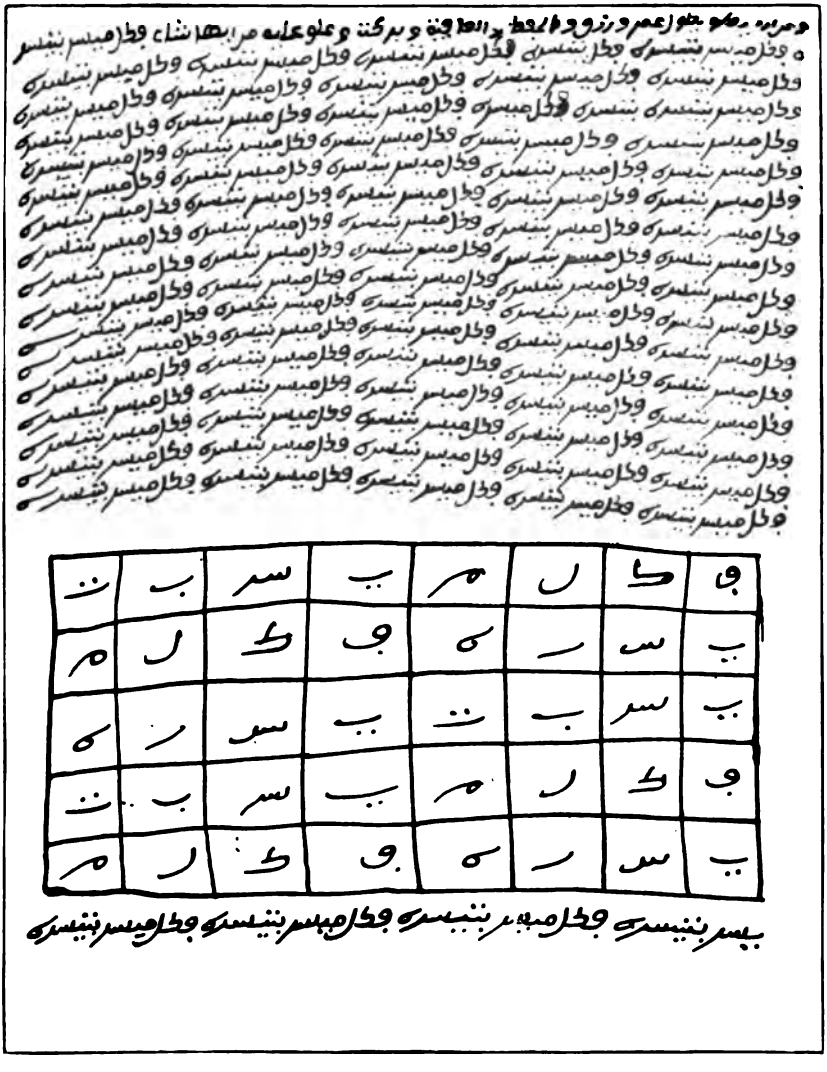
CHAPTER XII

FAREWELL TO BONTUKU

ORDERS to return—Limámu sends a Saffi—The Hausas leave Bontúku—The French Flags returned—The last of Bontúku—Soku revisited—A Nocturn—Character of the Country—Diádasu—Gigantic Ficus—Difficulty of transport—The Tain River—Its curious Fauna—A Mushroom Village—The Press Gang—The Source of the Tánno—Change in Soil and Vegetation—Akumadai—Kola—Destructive effect of Tornadoes—Abdulai Futa—Kwaku Saki—Nyami—Portable Tea-Service—Slavery—Its Advantages to the Native.

ON the 23rd of March the Major returned from his journey to Bori. On the previous day messengers had arrived from the coast bringing official letters, and I had sent on the one directed to the Major to meet him as he returned. He now communicated to me the contents of this letter, which were to the effect that we were to return immediately to Accra by way of Kumasi.

This was good hearing for all of us, for although Bontúku was a pleasant and interesting place, and life there was in many ways more agreeable than at Accra, yet the rainy season was fast approaching, indeed it rained heavily on the day of the Major's arrival, and we looked forward with some apprehension to a long journey through the forest with



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A "SAFFI" OR CHARM, WRITTEN FOR THE AUTHOR BY THE ALMAMI OF BONTUKU TO ENSURE SAFE RETURN TO THE COAST AND SUBSEQUENT GOOD FORTUNE.

the rivers swollen and overflowing, and the country inundated for miles around them.

The news of our contemplated departure soon spread through the town and, I am sorry to say, occasioned general rejoicing, although there were not wanting many little indications of friendship that were very gratifying. The Limámu sent a messenger to me with his blessing, and an elaborately written Saffi which he enjoined me to preserve carefully in a leather case and wear on my person, when it would ensure me good health, prosperity and a safe return to the coast.

Sidichi and Mahama also called several times and expressed their regret at losing my companionship, and hoped that one day they might visit the coast and meet me again.

On the 28th the Hausas marched out of Bontúku with orders to wait for us at Soku, and on the 29th we packed up all our belongings in readiness for our exodus on the morrow.

On the 30th, the last day of our residence at Bontúku, Sidichi turned up in the morning to bid us farewell. He had arrayed himself in his most gorgeous raiment on this solemn occasion, and was plentifully bedecked with silver chains and trinkets, among which I noticed (and made a sketch of) a very singular and gigantic ring on his finger.

I made him a few trifling presents, for which he appeared very grateful, and we then said "good-bye" with, I think, genuine regret on both sides.

We next proceeded to the Moslem quarter and held a public palaver, at which we handed over to the Limámu, as the King's representative, the French flags and treaty which we had received from Ajiman. We then wished our old friend farewell and returned to our quarters.

Before leaving the town I sent the Limámu a few pens and some paper, a gift which I knew he would appreciate, and he, in return, sent us some shea butter and a native cloth.

At a quarter to six in the evening we stood in the compound ready to start. Now that it came to leaving the house that had been my home for two months and in which I had spent many pleasant hours, I could not help experiencing a certain feeling of regret as I looked at the dismantled compound, bare of the tents and homely camp appointments, and at the empty "library" now reduced once more to a mere native hovel; but there was no time to indulge in sentiment, for the men were mustered at the gate and the band was already emitting sundry preliminary squeaks, so for the last time we passed out of the familiar gateway, the band struck up "The girl I left behind me", and we were fairly started on our homeward march.

When we had proceeded about a quarter of a mile, the sound of a galloping horse was heard behind us, and presently a horseman overtook us in great haste. It turned out to be one of my Mahommedan friends who had just heard of our departure.

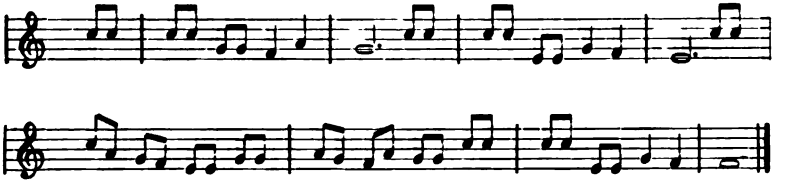
He wished me a safe journey and expressed his regret that he had not heard before that I was leaving, as he would have liked to get me a present as a souvenir. I thanked him for his good wishes, and having returned his "*Berikalla!*" we resumed our journey.

Our route lay entirely through thick wood in which the path was difficult to trace, and as darkness came on we found the greatest difficulty in making out our direction; and as we could only see one another when we were huddled up close together, there was great danger of some of our party getting lost. Once we entirely lost our way and for a long time we staggered about in the gloom, stumbling over roots and tripping one another up in a state of utter bewilderment.

At length, after two hours groping about in the wood, we saw before us the welcome gleam of a fire, and shortly emerged on to the open space by the town of Soku which had previously formed our camping-ground.

It was now discovered that some of the carriers had been lost in the wood, and among them was the man who had charge of my tent. So I had to utilize the cotton lining of a marquee (which had been issued to the expedition by the storekeeper at Accra, who imagined it to be a kind of tent) as a bed-room, making my bed on a row of store boxes. My ricketty covering swayed about and flapped like a sail with every breath of air, but fortunately the weather was dry and calm and so I was none the worse for the absence of my tent.

The night was very still and the silence was only broken by the occasional bark of the sacred monkeys in the grove, and the voice of a fetish man who spent the entire night in celebrating the worship of the Sakrobúndi fetish in the little temple under the great silk-cotton tree. This reverend person chanted in a loud and penetrating voice the following refrain at regular intervals of about one minute, and the effect of his weird and plaintive song breaking periodically the profound silence was extremely strange and uncanny.



At four o'clock the following morning the demon bugler took his stand at the door of my tent and introduced the subject of reveille, an abomination that I had nearly forgotten in the long interval of peace at Bontúku. For in that haven of rest I arose at such times as I thought proper, and "the voice of the sluggard" might sometimes have been heard demanding tea at half-past eight. But now all that was altered and the trump of doom drew me grumbling and shivering out into the chilly darkness to where the morning meal was set out on a baggage case, looking uninviting enough by the dim light of the lantern.

This being the first morning of the return march we

were some time getting ready for the start. The lost carriers all turned up none the worse for a bivouac in the woods; but we were now confronted by a difficulty that haunted us all the way down to the coast. We had not enough carriers to carry all our baggage, for a large proportion of our original staff had returned to the coast with the Commissioner. The Limámu had lent us men to carry our goods to Soku, but now we had to hire more to carry us on to the next halting-place. This occasioned some delay, but was at length accomplished, and by a quarter to six we were once more under way.

The route by which we proposed to return lay considerably to the east of that by which we came, so that from Soku to Kumasi we should be passing over ground new to us. Subsequent experience showed that this eastern route was much preferable to that by which we had approached Bontúku, for it lay through a much more open country; in fact we did not enter the dense forest until within about three days' march of Kumasi.

The country through which we passed on this day was open and park-like, covered with a strong coarse grass which was now just springing up fresh and green, but had only reached a height of about two feet. The trees were in some places thickly aggregated, but they were all small, the prevailing species being the shea-butter tree (*Bassia Parkii*) and there was no appearance of forest.

In some places the trees thinned out so as to leave

large meadow-like expanses from which we caught occasional glimpses of a range of hills lying to the south.

The state of the atmosphere was now very different from that which we had experienced on the upward march. All traces of the harmattan had disappeared with its distance-obscuring haze and its bracing dryness. Now the air was soft and moist, keeping the skin bathed in perspiration, and although actually cooler, felt much more muggy and oppressive than in the dry season. It was, however, more transparent, and when we reached an open space on rising ground, the details of the landscape were visible for an immense distance, and the wooded horizon showed a deep and clear blue. The soil was mostly the sandy loam that prevails around Bontúku, but fragments of quartz were everywhere plentiful.

At about half-past eight we passed through the town of Siki-Soku, about two-thirds of the size of Soku and very similar in appearance. At a little past ten we reached Diádasu, a smaller, but still a fair-sized, town, and here we determined to camp. We had been only four hours on the march, but those four hours we had gone without a halt; and as the country was quite open—for the scraggy, thinly scattered shea-butter trees gave no shade—the sun poured down on us through the clear air until we were nearly roasted.

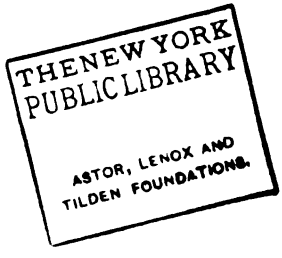
But it was worth being roasted to enter such a camp as that at Diádasu, for we took possession of the municipal shade-tree, and the like of that tree I have never seen.

In shape it was like an enormous mushroom and it overshadowed a space in which a dozen tents could have been pitched with plenty of room between them. Its shade was so absolute and its extent so immense that the light was quite dim underneath it, for not a ray could penetrate its dense sombre foliage. Its under surface, like that of a mushroom, was quite level, forming a flat ceiling of dark green not more than fifteen feet above our heads; and from the whole extent of this canopy of leafage great bundles of aerial roots hung down like dark-brown stalactites.

Under the shelter of this giant we took up our abode close to where its huge squat trunk sat upon a crumpled heap of contorted roots, and from our cool retreat we looked out into the dazzling glare of the town, where the whole of the inhabitants had collected and were now watching our men fixing up the tents.

The remainder of the day was passed with a degree of luxurious enjoyment that I have seldom experienced in Africa or elsewhere; for we were able to indulge in the unwonted gratification of sitting in the open air unmolested by the sun, which indeed rather added to our pleasure, for the sight of its burning rays pouring down on every place beyond the limits of our shelter, enhanced by contrast the shady coolness of our cloister-like retreat, just as the glowing fire on a winter's night is rendered the more pleasant and cosy by the moaning of the wind and the patter of rain on the window-panes. As I turned in at night I decided that this system of marching—starting

A VILLAGE OF SOUTH EAST JAMAN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early and pushing on without a pause until the final halt at mid-day—was a success. But the next day's experience caused me to modify my views on the subject, for the village in which we camped was absolutely without shelter. Now a tent, even though it be double lined, affords about as much protection from a tropical sun as a greenhouse, and before it has been pitched many minutes in the open its interior becomes like an oven. This fact I painfully realised on this occasion, for having fallen asleep in my tent, I presently awoke streaming with perspiration and sick with the heat, and the rest of the day until sunset was spent disconsolately wandering about the village in a fruitless search for a shady spot.

The country passed through on this day was similar in character to that between Soku and Diádasu, but there were fewer signs of human occupation and more indications of game. The ground showed the spoor of wild pigs in abundance, and we saw Guinea-fowl and bustards.

The only town met with besides our camping-place, Númasu, was Dibábi, a somewhat smaller town than Diádasu. Here I noticed several houses built in the Ashanti style, although most of them were of the ordinary Jáman type, oblong with four walls, and a doorway closed with a wooden door.

The carrier difficulty began now to assume rather formidable proportions. At Soku we had with some difficulty hired from the head-man or chief of the town, sufficient carriers to transport our baggage to Diádasu; and at Diádasu

we had succeeded in getting enough porters to carry us on to Númasu.

But here we found it quite impossible to hire men. It appeared that we should have to travel a considerable distance before meeting with a village, and the people of Númasu were not willing to venture so far from home. Our difficulties were further increased by the fact that sickness was making its appearance amongst our men, Guinea-worm being one of the prevailing complaints; and among the sufferers from this disorder was my servant Joe.

The transport difficulty had to be got over for the present by converting the Hausas into carriers which they greatly resented, not only on account of the labour it entailed, but also because of the indignity.

At daybreak on the 2nd of April we marched out of Númasu and proceeded for some hours through an open park-like country in which no signs of human habitation were visible. There were, however, on all sides indications of a profusion of large game, for the soft loamy soil, abundantly covered with worm-casts, was marked in all directions with the spoor of pig and antelope, and there were broad tracks beaten down hard by multitudes of large hoofed animals, apparently buffaloes, and in one place we encountered the tracks of an elephant.

About half-past eight we crossed the range of hills that we had seen on the preceding day, and from the summit several large isolated hills were visible. The track which we were following was far from distinct, the country being

at this part nearly uninhabited, and several times we lost our way. About mid-day the party began to straggle, and it became evident that we had again strayed from the track, for as I went on I overtook groups of our men sitting on the ground and declaring that it was useless to go on farther. As this appeared to be the case, and as I was almost exhausted, I sat down under a shea-butter tree to rest until the remainder of our party should appear; but the ground was burning hot and the scraggy tree gave no shade, so I presently wandered on a little further, when I came upon the Major, who, like the rest of us, was completely at sea. The halt had been sounded several times, and we now fired a few shots with our rifles to give the rest of our men notice of our whereabouts, and we then sat down on the baking ground to wait for them to come up. After some time, as they did not make their appearance, we commenced to retrace our steps with no little anxiety as to what had become of them, but after half an hour's marching we came upon them, to our immense relief, calmly sitting on the ground, preparing a meal. As we were all very much fatigued we considered it wise to camp where we were.

The following day's march brought us to the Tain river, one of the important tributaries of the Volta, into which it falls, according to one of our carriers, near to the town of Loa.

At the place and time that we crossed it the Tain was about fifty yards wide and three feet, six inches deep, but

the high steep banks seemed to indicate that in the rains it was a much more important stream.

The banks showed exposed strata of a soft yellow sandstone, and the bed was of the same rock overlaid with fine sand, in which masses of white quartz and largish scales of mica were to be found. The fauna of this river struck me as very curious and mixed. There were some small crabs (rather like our English *Carcinus mænas*, but more angular in shape), some small prawns of a deepish Prussian blue colour, the larvæ of dragon-flies of various kinds, several kinds of water-beetle, a species of *Planorbis* and some other characteristically fresh-water shells.

As we crossed the river the weather assumed a very threatening aspect, so we hastily set up our camp on the bank and made things snug in preparation for a rainy night, and we had only just finished our preparations when the rain came down in torrents and continued during the greater part of the night.

The contemptuous pity with which the white man tends to regard the "benighted African" is apt to give place to something akin to admiration and respect when it is observed how perfect is the adaptation of the latter to his surroundings and by what simple means he can continue to obtain a comfortable livelihood when a European would find it impossible to exist at all. I had frequently had occasion to observe in the course of our journey how remarkable is the African's capacity for making shift with little, and with how few appliances he manages to get through life,

but I was never more impressed with the superiority of the savage in his own special environment than on this evening when we camped by the Tain.

During our march up from the coast the weather had been almost invariably fine, and our followers, when night came on, took no measures for obtaining shelter beyond making plantain-leaf beds by the fires and wrapping themselves in their cloths. But now, no sooner had we halted than the men separated into small parties and commenced building little huts to sleep in, and so adroit were they, although provided with no tools but their cutlasses, that within the space of an hour a complete little village had grown up round the tents.

It was very curious to observe how each of the builders adhered to his national type of dwelling—reproducing in miniature the houses that were to be found in his native town or village. Thus the Fantis raised little oblong huts with high-pitched roofs and gable ends, the Hausas little beehive-shaped dwellings with a small hole for a doorway, while others built circular huts of a conical form with high pointed roofs.

The method of building was extremely simple and rapid, and the result most satisfactory. To take the case of the Fanti huts, the first proceeding was to cut two sticks about five feet long, having forked ends. These were stuck in the ground with the forked ends upwards and a long stick laid on the forks: this formed the ridge of the roof. Four shorter forked sticks were then stuck in the ground to form

the corner posts of the hut, and two sticks of the same length as the ridge pole laid across them. All these sticks were now fastened together with the thin cord-like stems of creepers, and a number of other sticks joined on in the same manner until the framework of the hut was completed. The roof and sides were then covered with large leaves, overlapping like tiles and thus there was produced a shelter that was perfectly rainproof. The beehive huts of the Hausas were formed of grass and were constructed with a central pole like a tent. When we turned out in the morning I looked with some anxiety towards the huts of our followers, rather expecting to see a good many of them in ruins; but in spite of the fragile nature of the materials of which they were built, they seemed none the worse for the torrents of rain that had been beating on them all night, and their inmates assured me that they had been quite dry and comfortable.

As we proceeded on the following day there appeared signs of a change in the character of the country. The endless stretches of grassy, orchard-like expanses began to be mingled with small belts of forest mostly of rather young silk-cotton and hard-wood trees. We crossed only one river in the whole of the day's march, a lovely little stream called Yo-Yo, whose limpid water flowed over a bed of pure white sand between banks clothed with a wealth of foliage. The end of our march brought us to Wenchi, [1]

[1] Spelt Wonki by Lonsdale.

another village, and glad enough we were to find ourselves once more in an inhabited region.

When we mustered on the following morning (5th April) the transport question again rose in increased urgency, for now we had several cases of Guinea-worm of a severe kind as well as other kinds of illness among our men, so that with an excess of baggage there was a decreasing staff of carriers, and in addition several men who were unable to walk required to be carried in hammocks. At first negotiations were opened with the Chief of Wenchi with a view to obtaining carriers, but it appeared that the different villages in the neighbourhood were in a state of chronic war with one another and the men of Wenchi did not care to venture in the vicinity of other villages. The Major offered to furnish the carriers with an escort back to their village, but they declined to have anything to do with us, and it seemed as though we should have either to stay where we were or abandon a great part of our baggage. But at this juncture the Major devised a cunning expedient to extricate us from our difficulties, which was carried out in the following manner.

While the preparations were being made for striking the tents and getting the expedition under way, the entire population of the village gathered round as usual to watch the entertainment. When the tents were packed and the loads issued to the carriers, and everything was ready for the start, a certain number of the Hausas sauntered away to the rear of the crowd of villagers. Then there suddenly

arose a sound of jabbering, and shouts of expostulation were heard, and in the twinkling of an eye the crowd of spectators had melted away, leaving a couple of dozen of able-bodied young men kicking and struggling and yelling in the tenacious grasp of the Hausas. The disappearance of the people was almost miraculous in its rapidity. One moment we were surrounded by a dense crowd of over a hundred persons; the next the village appeared to be without a single inhabitant excepting those who had been captured by our men.

Presently, however, the chief approached with much caution and trepidation, and commenced to expostulate, being evidently under the impression that we intended to take our prisoners away for good. On this point he was reassured, and told that the men would be paid for their services and that they would be sent back from the next town with an escort. When this was explained to the men they appeared to become resigned, and marched off with their burdens without further remark, so that we thought they quite fell in with the arrangement.

But presently several of them enlightened us on the subject, for when the expedition, on passing through a belt of wood, opened out somewhat, the Hausas of the rear guard suddenly came upon a row of loads lying on the road, the carriers having absconded into the bush. This was a solemn lesson to the Hausas, for they had to carry the loads the rest of the way themselves, and the mishap never occurred again. Thenceforward every impressed carrier

was closely attended by a Hausa who never allowed him out of sight for a moment.

A considerable part of this day's march was through dense forest, but once we ascended an eminence in the open country whence we could obtain a view extending twenty miles to the north and north-west. The country appeared to be a vast wooded plain with no considerable rising excepting a solitary mountain about 2,000 feet high, to the north-west. We crossed several considerable streams, another indication of our approach to the forest region, all similar in size and character—beautiful little forest rivers meandering quietly among the trees, between high banks of crumbling sandstone thickly covered with soft velvety moss and delicate ferns, the water as clear as crystal and their beds of silvery white sand.

The end of the day's march found us at Tekiman (or Tekyiman or Techiman, as it seems to be variously pronounced), where we remained on the following day to give our men a much needed rest.

While wandering about the town, picking up odd scraps of information, I came across some natives who informed me that a clear stream that rises near to Tekiman is the Tánno or Tánnor river. The place where it rises, I was informed, is called Boasi ("under the rock"), and the head waters issue as a spring from a great rock which has two objects like elephant's tusks projecting from it. The spring falls into a deep pool, the bottom of which—so my informant declared—is thickly covered with gold. This gold is the

property of the Tánno fetish and no person may, on pain of death, attempt to remove it. I much regretted that I was unable to visit this place, for not only would it have been interesting to compare the actual facts with the suspiciously picturesque description of the natives, but it would also have been well worth while to ascertain the exact position of the source of the river, which, next to the Volta, is the most important of the streams of the Gold Coast.

After a day's rest we resumed our journey on the 7th. As we proceeded in a southerly direction the patches of forest that occurred alternating with orchard-like country, increased in size and frequency; in fact the open country of Jáman was gradually merging into the forest of Ashanti. The geological character of the land exhibited a corresponding change. The yellowish-buff soil derived from the non-ferruginous sandstone which was almost universal in Jáman, still predominated, but now and again outcrops of the red stone occurred and these were usually covered with forest; but where the yellow soil was on the surface there were frequently evidences of the existence of the red rock at a little depth below, and in some places the layer of the yellow soil was so thin that the hills, and even the castings, of the white ants were of the subjacent red soil and showed up in vivid contrast to the dull yellow or buff surface upon which they were deposited.

The predominance of the soft yellow non-ferruginous sandstone no doubt accounts for the beautiful clearness of the streams of this region, the water being filtered as it

percolates through the stone, which, being devoid of iron, does not stain or discolour it.

In the course of the day's march we crossed the Tánno three times, and on the last occasion I noticed the two kinds of fish that I have mentioned in describing our upward journey.

At this place the river occupied a deep gully that it had cut through the soft sandstone, the underlapping edges of the strata forming a kind of rude staircase about thirty feet high where the path descended the river. The stone, where it had been exposed to the action of the water, was quite soft and crumbling, but elsewhere it was more like a flagstone in texture.

The country as we proceeded, became more populous and the villages more numerous, and towards the end of the day we found ourselves on a well-worn caravan road, along which large numbers of traders, nearly all Mahommedans and many of them Wongáras, were travelling towards Kantámpo and Sálaga. They carried on their heads large wicker sacks filled with kola which, we learned, they had purchased at Akumádai, at which place we arrived early in the afternoon.

Akumádai was a smallish town, extremely dirty and malodorous, with a large floating population of Mahommedans from Sálaga and Kantámpo. Its houses were mostly of the Jáman type, the roofs thatched with palm leaves, and in some cases with the large broad leaves of a species of *Ficus* which had somewhat the appearance of shingles;

and its streets were crowded with scraggy, filthy sheep and the large, gaunt cows from Sálaga. It appeared to be a kind of depot to which the Ashantis brought the kola from the plantations around Kumasi and sold it to the Mahommedan merchants from the interior.

The people here displayed more than the usual interest in us and our doings. They crowded round us to watch us take our meal, and then followed us to our tents to inspect us while we took our baths.

They not only filled up the door of my tent, but numbers of them pushed their heads under the fly so that they should not miss any detail. The front rank of the crowd at my tent door was formed by a row of five young women, and the attention with which they regarded me as I performed my ablutions was quite embarrassing. After tea the chief sent a deputation to ask if he and his friends might be permitted to look inside the filter, and when this modest request was granted, he begged as a further favour that we would allow him to take a little water from it. To this also we consented, and I have no doubt that that water was preserved as a powerful medicine.

While walking about the town I noticed numbers of tame parrots with docked wings perching about in the shade of the trees, and on the roofs of the houses, a thing that I do not remember observing in any other native town.

After leaving Akumádai the country seemed rather more thickly populated, and a greater number of travellers were encountered in consequence of our route coinciding with

that of the kola caravans from the Kumasi district to Akumádai. Now and again we met small parties of slaves bearing the wicker sacks and the bundles covered with green leaves in which the kola-nuts are packed for transport; but they were quite few in number and nowhere was there any sign of the great traffic that existed before the decline of the Ashanti kingdom. On our upward march, a few days' journey to the north of Kumasi, we passed through the great kola plantation, now quite deserted and neglected. All around us the ground was thickly strewn with the ripe "nuts" or beans that had fallen from the trees and were lying untouched, and which would presently decay, or be devoured by wild animals.

It was a melancholy comment on the departed prosperity and fallen condition of Ashanti, for the kola was the real wealth of the kingdom, far more important to its well-being than even its profusion of gold. It was to the kola that Ashanti was indebted for nearly the whole of its great caravan trade with the Mahommedan countries of the north and east, a trade that had supplied it with articles of use and luxury and had even augmented its stock of gold. In the palmy days of Ashanti when the kingdom was a united whole instead of, as in later times, a collection of mutually hostile tribes, these kola plantations were carefully tended and the produce regularly gathered for export. Now the plantations were uncared for and the abundant harvest running to waste. As we marched we trampled under foot produce that, in Kanu, would sell for two hundred thousand

kurdi (about ten pounds) per ass-load, and in the adjacent market of Kantámpo would fetch perhaps half that sum.

To the Mahommedan peoples of North and Central Africa, the kola—or *guru*, as the Hausas call it—is what tea and coffee are to Europeans, a luxury that has become a necessity. Hence to our Hausa troops the journey through these plantations was a stroke of good luck which they did not fail to appreciate and to fully avail themselves of; their pockets, their caps and every available space about their persons were stuffed with the precious nuts; their mouths were crammed to bursting point, and the progress of the expedition might have been traced by a trail of orange-coloured expectoration.

By the carriers scarcely any of the kola was taken. Here and there one would pick up a nut, nibble at it and throw it away again; but this was done in mere idleness and not from any liking for the kola. It is very curious that this nut should be an article almost of necessity to people living hundreds of miles from its habitat and yet be practically unused by those in whose midst it grows.

It is a common belief that the kola nut is endowed with qualities of an almost miraculous nature. It is stated that persons can, by chewing it, perform marvellous feats of endurance, and that they can undergo great and prolonged exertion without food and without suffering from hunger or fatigue. This belief my experience did not by any means tend to confirm. Our Hausas provided themselves when passing through the plantations with a sufficiency of

the nuts to last for the remainder of the journey, and they chewed them almost incessantly. The carriers, on the other hand, being nearly all pagans from the coast countries, did not as a rule chew the kola at all. But the endurance of the carriers was obviously greater than that of the Hausas, for each of the former carried on his head a load from fifty to a hundred pounds in weight, whereas the latter carried nothing but their rifles and accoutrements and any unconsidered trifles in the way of provisions that they might have snapped up on the road. Yet the carriers marched better than the Hausas, especially in hilly country, complained less of fatigue and kept their health better; in fact the daily "sick-repor squad" consisted almost entirely of Hausas.

The fact is that kola is almost identical in its action with tea and coffee, indeed its properties are principally due to caffeine of which it is said to contain about two per cent. Like these substances it is a stimulant which is capable of giving a temporary fillip to a jaded nervous system, but it is as incapable as any other stimulant of increasing the total amount of energy produced.

It appeared to me to resemble tea and coffee in another way, viz., in being a great producer of dyspepsia, for I noticed that those persons whose deeply-stained teeth, tongue and lips proclaimed their devotion to the kola nut generally presented unmistakable signs of gastric derangement.

On the 8th we camped at Assíasu on the bank of the

little river Assia, and in the evening I made a collection of the animals which inhabited it. Like the fauna of the Tain, that of the Assia included very diverse forms, among which were tadpoles, a species of *Unio*, a smooth black operculated univalve with an elongated spire, a small white chiton, a species of Gyrinus, and three other aquatic beetles; some larvæ resembling caddis-worm, larvæ of dragon-flies, and some small colourless prawns.

We had now fairly entered the forest and were by no means sorry to find ourselves once more within its shade; indeed during our marches through the open orchard-like country where we were continually exposed to the sun, we had looked forward with as much anxiety to our entry into the forest as we had on the upward journey to our emergence into the open. Certainly it becomes extremely depressing when day after day passes with no relief from the sombre twilight and the everlasting green canopy of the dense forest, and there comes a longing which daily increases in intensity for a view of the broad expanse of the blue sky and a glimpse of the distant horizon; but yet it must be admitted that with all its drawbacks the forest renders travelling in many respects easier for the European by protecting him from his great enemy, the sun. Moreover, from Akumádai to Kumasi we travelled along a well-used caravan road, so that we had the advantages of the shelter that the great trees afforded without the obstructions that rendered the route so difficult on the upward march, and had it not been for the fallen trees that lay

across the path—one of which we met with, I should think, on an average, about every hundred and fifty yards—most of the road would have been quite pleasant travelling.

The conditions in the forest had, however, changed somewhat since we passed through it before, for the dry season was over and the rains were now being ushered in by the tornadoes, and the declination of the sun having changed so as to bring that luminary almost vertically overhead at noon, its rays penetrated more easily the canopy of foliage and the forest was consequently much lighter.

When the tornadoes occurred—and there was one at least nearly every day now—the lofty top-heavy trees were overturned in all directions and could be heard crashing down among their crowded fellows: and once a tree fell right across our column, the men having barely time to escape before the immense mass of timber and foliage thundered down over the path. Observing the immense amount of damage that is occasioned by the tornadoes, and bearing in mind that there are two tornado seasons in each year, it becomes easy to account for the enormous number of fallen trees that are to be met with in the forest; indeed the wonder presently appears that any trees should attain any considerable age before their turn arrives to be toppled over. But the fact is that this process follows strictly a definite law of selection. The destruction is greatest among immature trees that have reached their maximum height, but are still slender and weedy, and of these, specimens that have failed to establish a root-base

in proportion to their height, or are situated on soil that furnishes insufficient hold for the fibrils of the horizontal roots, or whose centre of gravity falls out of the centre of the root-base, are specially selected for "elimination" by the tornadoes, and those that escape in early life are generally possessed of qualities that will enable them to permanently withstand the action of the wind until the decrepitude of extreme age once more renders them vulnerable.

Although hitherto no really heavy rains had occurred, yet the appearance of the country was considerably changed by that which had fallen. Streams that we had crossed on the upward journey with the water little above our knees, now reached up to our chins, and our men had to cross with greatest circumspection to avoid being swept off their feet. Even on these occasions I generally contrived to avoid a wetting (a matter of no small importance in the climate of Upper Guinea) by lying on the heads of four of my hammock-men as they proceeded in single file across the river.

In some places rivers had overflowed their banks, and tracts of land from a hundred yards to three-quarters of a mile wide were covered by running water three or four feet deep. In the matter of rain we were, considering the time of year, exceedingly fortunate, for we had not a single rainy day on the whole march, but by way of compensation it rained nearly every night, and frequently the whole night through.

This, however, caused us little inconvenience, for both the tents and the men's temporary huts were fairly water-tight

and when we halted at a town or village our followers obtained lodgings in the native houses.

During the return march our relations with our followers were somewhat different from those which existed at the time of starting and during the early part of our journey. A considerable number of the carriers had returned with the Commissioner, so that our party was a good deal smaller than it had been when we arrived at Bontúku; and as those who remained with us were mostly men who felt some degree of attachment towards us, the relations between us were now more familiar and friendly. But among both Hausas and carriers there were certain individuals who specially attached themselves to us. Among my native friends in the Hausa force, Abdulai Futa, the native officer, was one of the most constant, while my new orderly, Kukuruku, was most assiduous in his rather ill-directed attentions to me. My most devoted friends, however, were among the carriers, one or two of whom conceived so strong an affection for me that they hung about my quarters for months after my return to the coast. Kwaku Sakki, the ungainly, grotesque Ang-law, I have already spoken of as the official jester to the expedition. I had rather lost sight of him during our stay at Bontúku, and I am much afraid that Kwaku employed his time at that city in pursuits of a somewhat reprehensible character, for I observed him on one occasion making advances to a Wongára lady, which, even allowing for the simplicity and directness of African manners, were decidedly indelicate.

Now, however, he came to the front again and was continually performing little services that added to my comfort and evinced his regard. Whenever we halted for a meal Kwaku was on the spot with a baggage case to make a table, and a collection of faggots for the fire, and as soon as we prepared to set up the camp he busied himself in getting my tent in order and assisting to prepare food. He fully entered into my desire to collect specimens, and frequently while on the march he would shamble up to me with some shell or insect that he had picked up.

Another carrier to whom I became much attached and who shared with Kwaku Sakki the post of jester in ordinary, was an Elmina man named Kudjo Mensa (which being interpreted, means that he was born on Monday—Ejua-da—and was the third child). Mensa was of a singularly joyous and playful disposition, although more quiet than the boisterous Kwaku, and seemed to regard our journey with all its hardships and discomforts as a gigantic joke. He had once been a labourer on a steamer, and was very fond of personating a ship, to the unbounded amusement of the other carriers. As he sat on the ground, devouring a plantain, he would inform the assembled company that he was taking in cargo: then he would sit for a while and get up steam, and when the bugle sounded the advance he would rise and take up his load and start himself with a great ringing of imaginary bells and loudly spoken orders to go full speed ahead, and finally trudge off with his machinery clanking and his propeller thumping an

imaginary sea. When we waded across the streams he usually took soundings with his feet and announced the depth by shouting in genuine nautical style, "*And* a half-five"—or whatever he considered the depth to be; and once, when he slipped over head and ears into a swamp he emerged dripping and grinning, bawling "*No* soundings!"

We had attached to the expedition in the capacity of of "orderly-room clerk" a corporal of the Fanti police, named Anderson, a man who was much above his position, for he spoke excellent English, wrote a remarkably good hand (as educated negroes generally do), and was a most intelligent and trustworthy man. On account of his official position I would not allow Anderson to perform any menial offices for me, as he often wished to do, but I encouraged him to come to my tent and interpret for any Fanti carriers who had anything to tell me, or ventilate his own views on things in general, which were often extremely quaint and original. But by far the most devoted of my native friends was Nyami, a young Hausa, who had joined us as (I think) one of my hammock men. I never quite knew who my hammock men were, for I scarcely ever used the hammock, but there were eight of them and I believe Nyami was one. Quite early in the journey he had attracted my attention, partly by the manner in which he attached himself to me, pressing little services on me with simple and primitive politeness, and partly by his pleasing appearance and manner.

It was not that he was specially handsome, although he was decidedly a good-looking youth, but he had the gift, rather rare in Africans, of doing everything with an air of grace and distinction. He never adopted an awkward pose, he never squatted on his haunches in the monkey-like manner so usual among negroes, but all his movements and attitudes were elegant and graceful; in fact Nyami was a born model, and in our party where personal beauty was none too plentiful, was from an æsthetic point of view a great acquisition. Moreover, his disposition was such as to confirm the favourable impression produced by his appearance, for he was quiet, gentle and good-tempered, and he attached himself to me with a display of dog-like affection that was quite pathetic. So it happened that little by little he exchanged the position of hammock-man for that of my personal servant, although to the last he was always ready to take a turn at the hammock if I was fatigued or ill. As I have already mentioned, soon after leaving Bontúku my servant Joe developed Guinea-worm, and very shortly being unable to walk, had to be carried in a hammock which I bought for him just before leaving. Joe being thus placed on the sick-list, Nyami was by this time sufficiently expert at cooking and a servant's duties in general to take his place with a little assistance from Kwaku Sakki, Anderson and Kukuruku: and I was by no means sorry for the exchange, for Joe was a selfish and careless servant, while Nyami was absolutely devoted and seemed to think of nothing but my comfort.

On stormy nights when the rain was roaring on my tent and hissing on the ground outside, a black arm would insinuate itself under the dripping fly and reach for the mallet, and then I would hear the thoughtful Nyami hammering at the tent pegs and carefully letting the strain off the ropes.

While on the march, if any obstacle in front occasioned a temporary halt he was close at my heels with my deck chair that I might rest until the column moved on; and at one of the villages he possessed himself of a native fan, which he carried stuck through the cord of his load, with which to cool me while I was resting. Besides the chair and fan he carried a small "chop box," *i.e.*, a box containing the requisites for a meal and my portable tea-service, which I may describe for the benefit of intending travellers in this part of the world. This consisted of a large coffee tin, inside which was a soda-water tumbler that wedged in tightly; inside the tumbler was a small packet of tea, a few lumps of sugar, a teaspoon, a tin of condensed milk [1] and a box of matches. Here were all the necessary appliances for making tea. When we reached a stream the tumbler was removed from the tin and the latter filled with water: then some leaves and sticks being collected, a fire was made, the tin of water placed on it, and as soon as the water boiled some tea was stirred into it, and the thing was done. If the water was muddy the sediment was

[1] We received a fresh supply of stores by the messengers who brought the instructions for us to return.

allowed to settle, and the tea was then poured into the tumbler and consumed. I can confidently recommend this apparatus as the simplest and most portable with which I am acquainted.

Like a large proportion of the other carriers, Nyami was a slave. Among people at home the idea prevails that slavery is quite extinct in the British Protectorate, and in a certain sense this is true, for any adult slave can, if he chooses, claim to be liberated. But as a rule he does not choose, and so domestic slavery continues to exist on a large scale within British jurisdiction. The fact is that the name is rather misleading, and slavery as it exists among the Gold Coast tribes is a very different thing from what it is imagined by English people to be; is very different, for example, from the slavery of the American and West Indian plantations. Cruel as the African is in many ways, he is not a hard master and does not call upon his slave to do more work than is considered reasonable according to African standards.

Then the slave in Africa is not a mere chattel as he was under European masters; he has a definite status as a member of the household, with a certain claim to the inheritance of his master's property, and is at all times entitled to food, clothing and lodging, a matter of no small consideration to the thriftless happy-go-lucky negro; and it is not a matter for surprise that numbers of slaves have refused to avail themselves of the emancipation laws and have elected to adhere to the customs of their forefathers.

Unfortunately even the mildest domestic slavery has its black side, for a large proportion of the slaves have been captured in raids on their native villages and dragged away from their homes and families to be sold at distant markets. This had been Nyami's lot; and one evening he related his history to me.

He was born at Je-ga, a little town near Bida on the Niger. His town was on the bank of a river which the Je-ga people called Ba-kanu from the circumstance that a number of Kano men (Ba-Kanu) while crossing it, capsized their canoe and were drowned. I could not quite make out whether this was the Niger or a large tributary, from Nyami's description, which made it about the size of the Volta at Akwamu. His father was a trader named Bawa, who made journeys to Sálaga to purchase kola, which he sold at Je-ga and Kanu, and on one of these journeys when passing with his wife, his son Nyami, and a number of slaves through Bórugu (a notoriously unsafe district), the caravan was attacked, some of the slaves killed, and Nyami and his mother captured. Bawa escaped and afterwards returned and either rescued or ransomed his wife; but Nyami was taken to Sálaga, and thence to Kratchi (or Krake), where he was sold to an Adá man, who took him to Akuse on the Volta. Here he was employed by Mr. Waters, the agent for the firm of Swanzy Brothers, and subsequently by other Europeans. The Bórugu man who captured him filed a notch in his front teeth, and his Adá master bestowed on him the name of Nyami in the

place of his original name of Baku. Nyami assured me that his master always treated him kindly, and they were quite attached to one another. The arrangement between them appeared to be that Nyami should do what he pleased for a livelihood and should send half his earnings to his master, and when out of employment or not earning money, should be entitled to be supported by the latter.

This appeared to be the usual arrangement in cases of the kind, for several of the carriers told me that they maintained similar relations with their masters; and when the habits of the slaves are taken into account, it would seem that they have little to complain of, for when we returned to Accra I noticed that they speedily got rid of their share of the pay, and within a fortnight were quite destitute and dependent on the support of their masters.

CHAPTER XIII

KUMASI REVISITED

SICKNESS among the Men—Prince Ansah—Through Adansi—Pra-su—Pleasures of Civilisation—Relics of 1874—Ashanti Lamp—A White Man—Making a night of it—Cocoa-nut Palm—The Sea.

AFTER about eleven days of rapid marching we found ourselves once more in the vicinity of Kumasi, and as it was arranged that we should remain there for a whole day to rest the men, our approach to the capital of Ashanti was hailed with rejoicing by all the members of the expedition. The march up from the coast had been arduous and fatiguing, for the Commissioner had received strict orders from the Governor to make the journey in the shortest possible time, and the marches had been in consequence of undue length; but still, when the men complained of excessive fatigue they had been given an occasional rest. But the return march was infinitely worse, for the column had to keep on the move, and at a remarkably rapid pace, whatever might be the condition of the men; and if any of them became absolutely incapable of walking, they had to be carried by their comrades. Under these

circumstances the number of invalids naturally increased, for to the effects of fatigue were added those of the inclement season; and when we entered Kumasi for the second time, our party had somewhat the appearance of a hospital detachment.

We entered the north-eastern suburbs, and here I noticed a good many signs of industry, for we passed quite a large number of smithies with rude forges outside the houses, as well as several wood-workers' and stool-carvers' establishments. In great contrast to our former pompous entry amid the firing of guns and the din of music was our almost unnoticed arrival on this occasion, for we marched to our old quarters through the streets without attracting a dozen spectators.

On the following morning I walked out for a saunter round the town, with the object of examining and making notes of the curious sculptures on the houses. Kumasi impressed me rather more favourably on a second visit than at first, and I found several wide open streets that I had not seen before. While walking up one of these streets I received a surprise that made me for the moment think that I was the victim of a hallucination, for out of a narrow turning there emerged a gentleman arrayed in the costume of Piccadilly. I stood still and stared open-mouthed at this amazing apparition. He was clearly not a "scholar man" nor an ordinary "gentleman of colour," for the costume of that individual is *sui generis* and quite unmistakable. He wore a shapely "bowler", and a well-fitting, fashion-

ably cut suit of clothes; his cuffs, shirt-front and high collar were faultlessly got up; his patent leather boots were a miracle of polish, and in one of his kid-gloved hands he carried a modish walking cane. But the most astonishing thing was that he wore his clothes and carried his cane with the unmistakable air of a man who was accustomed to them, and not with the embarrassed manner of an occasionally dressed native. Presently the mysterious stranger observed me and approached, and then when he politely introduced himself to me as Prince Ansah, the mystery was solved.

We walked about the town for some time and Prince Ansah took me to the house where he was staying, and exhibited with great pride a remarkable assortment of firearms, including an 8-bore elephant gun, and he then returned with me to our quarters.

In the afternoon I had a sharp attack of fever and had to turn in early. It seemed as though the air of Kumasi did not agree with me, and I feared that I should have to leave the town without completing the sketches that I was so anxious to make of the sculptured figures on the walls. However, in the morning, while the preparations were being made for the start, I wrapped myself in a blanket and went round our house, with my teeth chattering and my knees trembling, and by the time the "fall in" sounded a considerable addition had been made to my notes and sketches of these curious and characteristic ornaments.

The remainder of our march was through country which

we had traversed on the upward journey—through Ka-si, Adwábin and Bekwe, and then into dreary desolate Adansi. For this dismal wilderness we were prepared this time, and our men laid in a sufficient quantity of food to enable them to pass through it without being subjected to the starvation from which they suffered on the first occasion; but still every one rejoiced when the last march in the deserted country arrived, and the ragged roofs of Atassi Kwanta were hailed with delight. On this last day of the forest march the expedition broke up into a straggling mob in which everyone went at his own pace. The thought of reaching Pra-su where a large accumulation of letters from home were awaiting us, acted as a powerful stimulant to the Major and me, and we excelled ourselves as pedestrians. Shortly after starting from Fómmana I caught sight of the Major well ahead and going at about five miles an hour, and presently he vanished in the forest and I saw him no more until evening.

About mid-day I endeavoured with the assistance of Nyami and Kwaku Sakki, to make a fire with a view to preparing tea, but the wood and leaves were too damp to light, so this project had to be abandoned, and I had to content myself for the present with some tinned beef and dry Benger's food, the only luxuries to be found in the "chop box." After this rather arid refreshment I marched on without a halt to Atassi Kwanta, and here the sight of smoke proceeding from the door of one of the houses revived my desire to quaff "the cup that cheers but not

inebriates," and in a few minutes my portable kettle was bubbling on the little wood fire.

Things now began to assume a more familiar aspect, and soon after leaving Atassi Kwanta we passed through the little village of Brofo Edru, which I well remembered. About a quarter of an hour after we emerged on to the right bank of the Pra.

The river looked very beautiful, and the little Government house on its farther bank very snug and homelike, with its jalousied windows, whitewashed walls and neatly thatched roof. In a few minutes I had crossed the ferry, scrambled up the bank and entered the compound by Fort Firminger, and having shaken hands with Sergeant-Major Abba—who was in charge of the station—made the best of my way to the mess-room. Here, on the table, was a great heap of letters from home, which I hastily gathered up and conveyed to my room to devour in peace.

The Government house, in reality a ramshackle cottage, appeared to me quite palatial, and its rooms enormous after the tiny cells to which I had been accustomed. The windows too, were a very novel feature and gave the place an extremely airy appearance; while the pleasure that I experienced in walking on the level wooden floor, and in surveying the even, perpendicular walls and the painted wooden ceiling, served to remind me that a large proportion of the comforts of life become lost sight of by reason of their habitual character.

Early the following morning the Major left Pra-su for

Assin-Yan Kumasi. I did not start with the main body as I had received orders from the Governor to fix the position of Pra-su by an observation either of the sun or a star; besides which, the sick members of the detachment were not fit to start until they had had a longer rest. Having taken a very indifferent meridian altitude of the sun, I prepared to get on the road, but now a tremendous downpour of rain occurred that rendered our starting quite out of the question, and the rain continued until it was too late to start at all.

When the rain had ceased I paid a visit to the cemetery where the men who fell in the Ashanti war of 1873-4 are buried. A long path leads to the ground, turning off from the camp by a large silk-cotton tree, upon the roots of which I read the inscription

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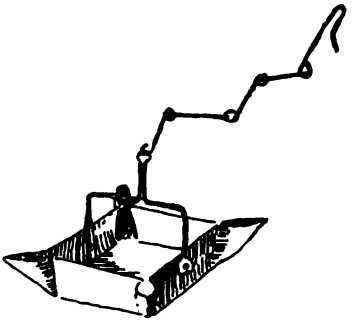
now nearly obliterated. On another tree further up the path was a more distinct and smaller inscription,

. The cemetery is a large mound planted with smallish trees. In one corner is a circular space enclosed by a rough cane fence, in the centre of which is a fine shade-tree which stands upon a mass of contorted roots.

When I returned to the house and tried to make myself comfortable for the night I suddenly realized that Joe, whom I had allowed to go on with the main body, had taken with him all my kit and provisions: so here I was

without a bed, a lamp or any of my stores or cooking utensils. However, this mishap had one good result: it introduced me to a very curious copper Ashanti lamp made to burn palm oil, which Abba borrowed for me from a neighbour.

When, on the morrow, we started from Pra-su we experienced the novel sensation of walking on a made road, and very pleasant it seemed to have underfoot a firm even surface and to be able to walk two or three abreast. Of this latter advantage, our men certainly did not often avail themselves, but proceeded as in the forest, in single file; and a narrow track worn down the middle of the road, showed that the natives who passed along it habitually preserved the same formation in travelling.



ASHANTI COPPER LAMP.

As we approached the village of Barako, Nyami, who had entered in advance, came back to me in a state of great excitement to tell me that "*Nasára akoi,*" while at the same time one of our sick Fanti carriers shambled off, yelling "*Broeni ahaw*" and pointing in the direction of one of the village houses, by which I learned that there was a white man in the village. Now as I had not seen a white man, excepting my two companions, for nearly five months this was quite exciting news, and I wondered

as I hastened towards the house whether this white man was one of my Colonial friends. It turned out that he was a perfect stranger, a foreman of works who had been sent up to repair the road. The evening brought me to Assin-Yan Kumasi, where I picked up Joe and my kit, and from him I learned that the main body had marched off early in the morning, the Major having decided not to wait for the sick and the rear-guard who were with me.

Another day's march ended at Mansu, where I took up my quarters once more in the little wooden house belonging to the Government, and turned in early to make sure of a long night's rest. But before I had been in bed a quarter of an hour a party of hyænas took up their station close to the house and performed a dismal chorus. Then several pottos in the high trees of the forest that surrounds Mansu commenced to screech in a manner suggesting a company of vocalists from the infernal regions, and when these sounds had quieted down somewhat, I heard a leopard prowling round the house. Now it happened that I had brought from Bontúku a particularly beautiful sheep of a kind unknown on the coast—a long-horned, Roman-nosed animal with long silky hair somewhat like that of the Angora goat. This sheep had become very tame, and when we were on the march it usually trotted after me or Nyami, like a dog, and on this occasion it had been tied up just outside my door. I decided that it was to my protégé that the attentions of the leopard were directed, and the sheep seemed to be of the same opinion, for he

bleated furiously: so I went out and fetched him into the house and locked him up in one of the rooms, where he stumped about for the remainder of the night as if he had wooden legs. Then by way of making things more tranquil and peaceful, the natives of Mansu turned out with drums and horns to scare away the leopard; and certainly if he had remained in the midst of the hubbub that they made he would have been a leopard of most unusually strong nerve.

On the following day we marched from Mansu to Kwádu Agá, a village near to Dunkwa. Here I put up at an elegant one-story house which belonged to the head-man of the village, a partially educated trader. This house was furnished in the Africano-European style, with chairs, tables, sofas and various articles imported from Europe, including a large mirror, which was a source of unbounded astonishment and delight to a couple of Hausas who had accompanied us from Bontúku and who had never been near a European settlement before.

At about half-past eight next morning, 23rd of April, we started on the last of our inland marches. Soon after leaving Kwádu Agá we emerged from the forest into the open rolling country that lies between the forest and the sea. At one of the villages on the road we met with cocoa-nut palms, now quite a novelty—for the cocoa-nut is entirely confined to the sea-board. The two Hausas had never before seen these palms, this being their first journey to a seaside country, but they took very kindly to the

milk of the nuts, and in fact drank so freely from the fresh green fruit that they perspired freely for the rest of the day.

About mid-day, on ascending a high ridge, we came in sight of the sea and at the same time felt the fresh sea-breeze blowing in our faces. With this encouragement we stepped out briskly and in three hours more entered the town of Saltpond, a trading station of some importance about eleven miles to the east of Cape Coast. After staying here for a day we continued our march along the sandy beach to Accra, a distance of about sixty-five miles. On the 28th of April we entered that town and our journey was at an end.

CHAPTER XIV

OBSERVATIONS UPON DRESS AND PERSONAL ORNAMENT IN THE REGION DESCRIBED

COMPLETE nudity exceptional—Dress of Pagan Tribes—Primitive Clothing ornamental rather than protective—Essential Modesty of the Primitive Mind—Misguided Zeal of Missionaries—The Loin-Cloth—The Ntama—How worn—Head-dress of Men—Dress of Pagan Women—Of the Infant and Young Girl—Of the Adult—The "Bustle"—Head-dresses and Coiffure of the Women—Necklaces—The Aggri Bead—Fabulous origin—Native Jewellery—Dress of the Mahommedans—The Tobe or Riga—The Wondo—Caps and Turbans—The Litham or Face-cloth—Hats—Boots, Slippers, and Sandals—The Zenne—The Bernus—Saffis—Weapons—Personal Ornaments—Rings—Armlets—Dress of Mahommedan Women—Arrowhead Pendant—Decoration of the Skin—Tattoo Marks—Incisions—Raised Cicatrices.

ALTHOUGH in various parts of this narrative allusion has been made to the articles of clothing and ornament in use by the natives, it may be well (the evil of repetition being less than that of omission) to give in this place a general sketch of the dress of the inhabitants of the region described.

In the Gold Coast and the surrounding countries complete nudity in an adult of sound mind[1] is extremely rare except-

[1] In native communities lunatics usually go naked. When having noticed this fact, I enquired the reason I was informed that people whose "head

ing in special circumstances; in fact I can only recall a single instance in which I have seen a grown person quite destitute of clothing without some evident reason. On this occasion I was crossing the Avon lagoon (or Togo See) in a canoe when I passed an elderly woman quite nude, poling a canoe home from an adjacent market. This, however, was rather in the Dahomey than the Gold Coast region. On the Kru Coast I have frequently seen natives quite unclothed, paddling their tiny, crank canoes, and one individual who was thus "in native worth and honour clad" had added to this airy costume a chimney-pot hat. The Gold Coast district, however, is in civilization many grades above the "we country" of the Kruboy, and in it clothing of some sort is *de rigueur*.

This universal prevalence of clothing has almost certainly been brought about by the desire for personal adornment. The idea that it is protective in character is negatived alike by the nature of the climate, which renders protection unnecessary, and that of the clothing which is not competent to afford protection, and that it is not due in the first place to considerations of decency is clearly shown by the unconcern with which the garments are abandoned on occasion.

I have on several occasions seen women at Accra walk from the beach, where they had been bathing, across the

spoil"—to use the local expression—invariably tore up or made away with their clothing, and their practical-minded friends thought it unnecessary to provide them with fresh garments.

road to their houses, where they would proceed to dry themselves and resume their garments; and women may not unfrequently be seen bathing in pools by the roadside, conversing quite unconstrainedly with their male acquaintances who are seated on the bank. The mere unclothed human body conveys to their minds no idea of indecency, but is regarded with that simplicity and natural modesty which is usual among primitive peoples; and, although their morals are loose and their expletives foul beyond expression, I can fully confirm the statement of Mr. Winwood Reade, that immodesty and indelicacy of manner are practically unknown.

The fact is that indecency, as we understand the word, can hardly exist apart from clothing, but results from the partial or complete exposure of a body that is habitually covered. Even by Europeans new to the locality, the scantiness of raiment among the natives is not noticed, and it is much to be regretted that the excessive zeal of some missionaries has led them to induce their converts to adopt the European style of dress, which the natives are unfortunately only too ready to do.

When this occurs the effect is disastrous in several ways. In the first place the result aimed at is not achieved, for the close-fitting garments, necessarily thin in texture, are much less modest than the loose flowing cloths that they replace. Then they are obviously less cleanly than the latter and do not afford the same facility for frequent ablutions; while in appearance the falling off is most lamentable.

In his native dress, whether Moslem or pagan, the African is a dignified and picturesque figure: in the costume of Europe, as seen in the streets of Sierra Leone, he is a mere travesty of the white man, and unless dressed with considerable care and judgment becomes converted from an African into a nigger. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to bring the natives of districts in which Europeans are numerous to see this. Perceiving the general racial superiority of the white men, they consider it wise to imitate them, and, like many imitators, while letting essentials pass unnoticed they fix upon and closely copy mere externals.

The varieties of costume met with in the region which I have described fall naturally into two groups—those of the pagan races and those of the Moslems. Between the dress of the pagan and Moslem women the difference is not great, but it is quite otherwise in the case of the men.

We will first consider the dress of the pagan tribes of the coast as seen especially in large towns such as Accra, Elmina and Cape Coast, which is practically identical with that of Ashanti.

Young male children do not wear any clothing. Boys of from five to eight are sometimes provided by their parents with a rag of cloth to wear as a "ntama" or "country cloth", but this usually serves rather as a plaything than a garment. At the age of seven or thereabouts the garment euphemistically known as the "loin-cloth" is adopted: which consists of a cord, usually of twisted cloth, fastened

round the hips, and a strip of cloth which is passed between the legs and attached "fore and aft" to the cord, in the same manner as the T-bandage of the surgeon.

This article of dress is used by all adults whether pagan, Moslem or Christian. In many cases, especially among fishermen and labourers, it forms the only attempt at clothing, but it is never discarded whatever other changes of costume may be made. It is retained as an undergarment by the elaborately clothed Mahommedans, by our own native soldiers and even, as a rule, by those natives who have in other respects completely adopted the European style of dress.

The other garment in almost universal use is the *ntama* or "country cloth," a rectangular piece of cotton fabric, about two fathoms long and three-quarters of a fathom wide.[1] The cloths most in request are of native manufacture, and of these there are two kinds: one of which is woven from imported yarn of European manufacture, and the other from native yarn made by spinning the raw cotton on rude spindle whorls. The native yarn is much thicker and looser than the English, and the cloths produced from it are thicker and softer in texture than the others. Both kinds of native cloth are more expensive than the imported fabrics, but they are so much more durable that the extra outlay is willingly made. Of the two varieties, that made from native yarn is the more costly and the more serviceable.

[1] A fathom, measured across the outstretched arms, is the standard of length in common use on the Gold Coast.

Besides these ordinary cloths which are made throughout the country and are sold in all the markets, there are certain special forms of peculiar excellence, among which the beautiful productions of Kumasi take the first place. Many of these Kumasi cloths are woven entirely or in part of silk—of course imported, and in design and finish are exquisite. They are not very often met with, for the industry is a small one, and their price, which sometimes exceeds twenty pounds, naturally restricts their use.

There is also produced at Kumasi a very curious cloth of white cotton on which designs are painted, usually in a dark brown pigment, and Bowdich, who gives a figure of one, describes the workmen as producing the patterns with a fowl's feather, with astonishing rapidity and skill.

All these native fabrics are woven in narrow strips not more than four inches in width, which are sewn together, edge to edge, to produce the finished cloth, and as the patterns are always linear, the joins are generally quite invisible.

The mode of wearing the ntama varies slightly in different districts, but generally speaking it may be said to closely resemble the toga of the Romans. It is wrapped round the body, passing under the right arm, and the ends are crossed over the left shoulder, and the extra length being turned up over them, holds them firmly together. Worn thus the ntama envelopes the whole body, excepting the right arm and shoulder, in an ample drapery, the folds of which fall in very graceful lines; and simple as the

NATIVE WEAVER.

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garment is, on a tall well-built man it has a really fine and dignified effect. It is not, however, in this form, very convenient if active exercise has to be taken, and hence a native, when about to engage in any laborious occupation, commences by "girding up his loins", removing the ends of the cloth from his shoulder and twisting them together over the hip. Thus the body is left uncovered from the hips upward.

Under ordinary circumstances no other clothing is worn by a male pagan than that above described, but frequently sandals are added, and on dress occasions a fillet formed of a folded silk handkerchief is worn round the head. In rainy weather a thatch hat protects the head and shoulders, and occasionally hats of plaited grass are worn, but most of these I imagine are imitated from European patterns.

The dress of the women is somewhat more elaborate than that of the men, and is assumed at an earlier age. The girl baby does not remain entirely unclothed more than a few months, when she is promoted to a string of beads, where these are procurable, which are worn round the hips immediately below the crest of the hip-bone. Concerning the pattern of these beads, fashion is, in the coast districts, remarkably constant. The individual beads are large, rather flat, opaque and of a canary yellow. The flat sides of the beads are in apposition when strung, so that a rather thick band is produced, and there are commonly two or three strings of beads to one girdle. When the child reaches the age of four or five, and sometimes

sooner, an addition is made in the form of a strip of red cotton cloth, which is passed between the legs and drawn through the bead-girdle before and behind. In most districts both ends are carried to the back and hang down behind; but another and, I imagine, an older fashion, is to allow one end to hang down in front nearly to the ground, forming a sort of narrow apron. This is the fashion that still prevails in the rather primitive Krobo district, and there the strip of red cloth forms the sole clothing not merely of children, but of girls and young unmarried women.

The ordinary dress of a woman consists, in addition to the above, of a lower cloth, which we may call the skirt, which is wrapped round the hips and reaches to below the knee, and an upper cloth, which is brought round the body immediately below the arms, and reaches somewhat below the hips, but which is sometimes worn over the left shoulder in the same manner as a man's cloth. Women who possess babies utilize this cloth by carrying their infants in it, and this was probably the original function. The child sits behind its mother "pick-a-back" fashion, and the cloth having been passed round it, is fastened across the mother's breast by twisting the ends together. This is well shown in the left-hand figure in the illustration on p. 387.

A similar origin must be ascribed to another article of dress which is in universal use among the females of the Gold Coast district, and which we may call the "bustle" from its resemblance to the monstrosity of that name which

GROUP OF NATIVES, SHOWING THE MODE OF WEARING THE NTAMA

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

used to disfigure the persons of English women. This consists of a pad of cloth fastened to the back of the girdle under the skirt-cloth which it causes to bulge posteriorly in a manner much admired by the native women. When a child is being carried this excrescence forms a seat which supports it very comfortably, and I have no doubt that it was originally intended for this purpose, although it is now worn as I have said by all females, including little girls.

The head-dresses in vogue among the pagan women and the fashion in the arrangement of the hair vary considerably in different districts, and even in the same district. The most elaborate forms are seen in Fanti and Accra, the Eastern districts and the interior countries presenting much greater simplicity; in fact in the smaller towns and villages most of the women leave the head quite uncovered and the hair in its natural condition of "wool." Women who are in mourning commonly shave the head completely, as do some others for the sake of cleanliness or to promote the growth of the hair. Children also very commonly have the head shaven either entirely or so as to leave an island of hair on the summit of the head.

In the normal state the hair of the negro forms a dense harsh woolly mass that lies close to the head. This is due to the fact that each individual hair is coiled closely upon itself in a spiral, like a watch-spring, which it, indeed, very much resembles, being flat and ribbon-like instead of cylindrical like the hair of a European.

Now before the hair can be dressed in any of the prevailing modes it is necessary that these little spirals should be unwound, and this is accomplished by passing a comb into the mass of the "wool" and making firm traction. For this purpose European combs are often used, but the native implement is probably more suitable. The operation is generally performed by a friend or servant, and the operator sits upon a low stool while the "subject" sits upon the ground between her knees.

The disentanglement of the matted wool is the occasion of no small tribulation to its owner, but when the operation is completed it is astonishing how great a mass of hair is produced from the thin stratum of wool.

The native beauty having straightened out her hair, has now a choice of various methods of disposing of it. She may gather it up into straight bundles, or work it into plaits, or comb it over one or more pads. Of each of these methods there are several varieties. One of the most becoming is to gather the whole mass of the hair up into a single large bundle which is bound tightly at intervals by encircling bands. A less agreeable appearance is presented when the hair is parted in the middle and the two masses bound up into two straight bundles resembling the horns of an antelope (or those conventionally represented upon the head of the Devil). Or the hair may be divided into four or six portions, producing a corresponding number of bundles, which is perhaps the least becoming of all: or instead of being gathered up into bundles, the divisions may be converted into a circle of chignon-like balls.

YOUNG FANTI GIRL, SHOWING BEAD-GIRDLE AND CLOTH.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

Plaiting is not a success with the hair of the pure negro, as the plaits stick out in a rat's-tail or pump-handle fashion that is not graceful, although the longer and softer hair of the Fula half-breeds is very becoming when treated in this way. The prevailing styles are shown in the accompanying sketches.

FANTI WOMAN WITH "SKIRT CLOTH."
(The hair is combed over a pad and worn without a fillet.)

FANTI WOMAN WITH SKIRT- AND SHOULDER-CLOTHS.
(The hair is combed over pads and encircled by a fillet.)

The practice of combing the hair over pads is much in vogue in the Fanti towns, and the effect produced may be judged by inspection of the sketches on pages 400 and 403 and the accompanying illustrations.

Of each of the styles above described there are three varieties. In the first the hair is left entirely uncovered: in the second the head is encircled by a band or fillet of

varying width, consisting of a folded silk handkerchief: in the third the hair is entirely enveloped in the rainbow-tinted handkerchief, which is applied much in the manner of Esmarch's head-bandage. The variations in appearance so produced are shown in the accompanying illustrations.

NATIVE COMB WITH ENGRAVED PICTURE-WRITING.

On occasions of state the hair, particularly when drawn over pads, is plentifully besprinkled with ornaments of the soft yellow native gold, and there is generally worn also a large ornamented hair-pin or skewer, the principal purpose of which is to enable the lady of fashion to scratch her head without disturbing the arrangement of her elaborate *coiffure*.

In Krobo a very remarkable head-dress is worn by the women, consisting of a tall cylindrical hat of fine wicker-work. It is, I believe, quite peculiar to the Krobo district, although the accompanying figure which represents a Christiansbong (Osu) girl in the costume worn at the religious festivals or "Customs," shows an almost identical form—indeed the dress of this girl is practically a glorified form of that of the country girls of Krobo. It is rather curious that the Krobo women, who are so much more scantily clothed than the women of any other district, should be the only ones who wear hats, and

it is to be noticed that these head coverings are not, like those of the other districts, confined to women of the upper

NATIVE COMB WITH ENGRAVED PICTURE-WRITING.

classes, but are worn by the common people in the small villages.

The only head coverings that I met with at all resem-

bling these were the extinguisher-shaped deerskin hats worn by the men of Krepi, and the hat of the hunter whom I met in the village of Gruinsi. [1]

It now remains to notice the ornamental accessories of the feminine costumes among the pagan peoples. Necklaces

NATIVE COMBS.

are universal and their variety is infinite. In the more civilized districts they are generally composed of beads, in the stringing and arrangement of which remarkable taste is often exhibited, and the necklaces so produced are in many cases extremely elegant, especially when the handsome Venetian beads are used. Sometimes the necklace consists

[1] P. 320.

HAUSA WOMAN COMBING HER DAUGHTER'S HAIR.

of a piece of string on which two or three valuable beads are strung, or in some cases the string carries a single Aggri bead which is secured by a knot.

The Aggri bead is one of the mysteries of West Africa, for while the account given by the natives of these objects is obviously mythical, yet no perfectly satisfactory explana-

HAIR DIVIDED INTO A CIRCLE OF CHIGNON-LIKE BALLS.

HAIR GATHERED UP INTO A SINGLE LARGE BUNDLE BOUND TIGHTLY BY ENCIRCLING BANDS

tion of their presence has, as far as I know, been forthcoming. In form, colour and general character different specimens differ so widely that it seems impossible to lay down any characteristics as being diagnostic of the genuine Aggri bead. Some examples shown to me by natives have appeared mere shapeless masses of semi-opaque yellow glass perforated for the passage of a cord, while others

have been quite opaque and porcellaneous, of various colours, plain or variegated, and of different shapes, spherical, ovate, oblong, etc.

But although to the European there seems no means of distinguishing the genuine bead from any others, the natives, or at any rate the old men and women, do so with unerring

HAIR DIVIDED INTO FOUR PORTIONS.

HAIR COMBED OVER PADS.

accuracy. An enterprising Birmingham firm, I was told, once obtained a number of Aggri beads and manufactured a quantity of imitations which were so excellent that European experts were quite unable to distinguish them from the original models.

These fictitious Aggri beads were introduced on to the Gold Coast, but the fraud was instantly detected by the natives: so that it is evident that the genuine Aggri bead must have some distinguishing characteristic, although the

OSU GIRL IN FESTIVAL COSTUME.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

natives either cannot, or more probably will not, explain what that characteristic is.

These articles are greatly prized in the district, a single bead being worth more than its weight in gold; and it is stated that, in Ashanti, if one is stolen the thief is required to furnish seven slaves by way of making restitution. They play the part of heir-looms in many families and one of

HAIR COVERED WITH KERCHIEF.

SINGLE VERTICAL PLAIT COVERED WITH KERCHIEF.

them is often given to a bride on her wedding day. They are not usually worn in chaplets excepting by royal or very wealthy persons, but a single bead is commonly suspended by a string from the neck or wrist.

As to their origin nothing is really known. They are certainly not imported or manufactured by any European nation at the present day, and it seems probable that they come from the interior. When I returned to Accra in 1889 from Ashanti and Jáman, several natives called upon me to

enquire whether I had brought any Aggri beads, and when I questioned them as to the source whence they are generally obtained they gave me the following account. Travellers in the far interior, they said, when journeying through the wilderness at night sometimes see a tongue

ACCRA WOMEN SHOWING DIFFERENT MODES OF DRESSING THE HAIR.
(The body-covering is not in the native fashion.)

of flame rise out of the ground. They at once proceed to dig on the spot whence the flame arose and presently they find one or more beads.

All other natives to whom I spoke of the matter were agreed that the Aggri beads were dug out of the earth, and it would seem probable that a belief so universal has

some foundation in fact. It may be remembered that Mr. Theodore Bent in the course of his excavations in the Zimbabwe ruins in Mashonaland dug up some beads which he considered as Egyptian of the Ptolemaic period, and it is not improbable that the Aggri beads may be the exhumed relics of a long forgotten commerce carried on by the ancient inhabitants of the Gold Coast and one of the great civilized nations of antiquity.

In more primitive districts necklaces are often to be seen composed of natural objects, such as teeth, bones and shells, and it is curious to observe how objects which singly have no beauty whatever and may even, as in the case of teeth, be rather unpleasant to look at, when multiplied and arranged in a series produce extremely effective ornaments. Thus, one of the prettiest necklaces that I saw was composed of the humeri or arm bones of a small species of tortoise, and another of the little yellow shells of a species of *Neritina*, strung on a number of threads which were afterwards twisted together like the strands of a cable.

NECKLACE OF NERITINA SHELLS.

In Cape Coast, Elmina and Accra, native-made chains of gold are often worn round the neck: they are curious and sometimes intricate in workmanship, but can hardly be regarded as products of indigenous art.

Rings are worn upon the fingers, thumbs and toes, and

are of very various materials, the commonest being silver, copper and brass. They are also made by cutting, or grinding on stone, the shell of the palm nut (the seed of the oil-palm), and these are often very elaborately carved, and in appearance resemble bog-wood or dull jet. Another form of ring much in favour, especially among children, is produced by threading minute beads on cotton.

At Cape Coast and Elmina, as well as at Kumasi and some other interior towns, gold rings of very fair design and workmanship are produced. Those of Cape Coast, of course, show very distinct European influence, but nevertheless have a character of their own. Many of them are of filigree work, light and pretty in design; but the most characteristic form is the well-known "Zodiac ring", a specimen of which decorates the finger of nearly every European who visits the Gold Coast, and which has thus become the recognized badge of the "Coaster."

The usual form consists of a flat band of gold with raised edges, which is surrounded by a series of projecting figures more or less resembling the symbols of the signs of the Zodiac. I was unable to discover what had led the Cape Coast goldsmiths to adopt this design, which is a very favourite one with them, for it appears not only on the rings, but also on the brooches, clasps and other ornaments produced by them.

Bangles of silver, copper or brass generally adorn the wrists and ankles, and armlets are often worn above the elbow: very frequently, however, the metal ornaments are

replaced by a string carrying a single bead, and such a string, either with or without beads, invariably encircles one leg, usually the right, just below the knee. [1]

The ears are generally pierced and bear ear-ornaments of various kinds—ear-rings, strings of beads, and even small sticks or dry grass-stems. The irritation caused by the bead strings and the little sticks frequently produces thickening and over-growth of the lobule of the ear, and comparatively large fibrous tumours of the lobule from this cause are not uncommon, some that I removed being fully three inches in diameter.

The costume of the Mahommedans is radically different from that of the pagans and represents an entirely different level of civilisation, for whereas the clothing of the latter consists exclusively of simple draperies wrapped round the body, that of the former consists for the most part of made garments, at any rate among the males.

The characteristic garment of the Mahommedan men is what is called by the Europeans a "tobe" and by the Hausas a *riga*. This is a wide-sleeved gown of ample

[1] This fact is of some surgical interest, for there prevails in this country an impression among surgeons that the varicose veins so often seen in elderly women are to a great extent produced by the use of garters worn below the knee. Now the use of these string garters is, as I have said, universal among the women of the Gold Coast district, and they are never removed until they wear out, when they are immediately replaced. They are, moreover, worn so tight that, when I have had occasion to remove them from patients at the hospital, I have found them buried in a deep groove in the skin. Yet I do not remember meeting with a single instance of varicose veins in a native woman.

proportions and of varying length, reaching in some cases barely to the knees and in others nearly to the ankles. Among the poorer classes it often forms the only garment, but generally it is supplemented by loose drawers or *wondo*.

Complete as this garment looks when it is being worn, it is not so great an advance on the simple country cloth or ntama as it at first appears, for in its simplest form it is nothing more than a square of cloth with a hole in the centre and the corners sewn together. Nevertheless it is an extremely handsome garment even when quite simple in material and design, and the long vertical folds that drop from the shoulder impart to the wearer, especially if he be a tall man of good bearing, a dignified and even commanding aspect. It is seldom, however, that the tobe is left quite without ornament; usually it is decorated with a kind of embroidery the colour of which depends upon that of the cloth on which it is worked, and its elaborateness upon the value of the material. The most highly prized material is a cotton cloth of a dark bluish grey speckled with white, the speckles running in narrow lines, which is known among the Tuareks as the Guinea-fowl pattern, by the Arabs as *filfil* or pepper, and by the Hausas as *riga saki*. Tobes made of this cloth are generally very handsomely embroidered in white, the greatest amount of ornamentation being bestowed upon the immense pocket that occupies the whole of the left breast and often extends nearly to the bottom of the gown. When the material of the tobe is white the embroidery is generally of a dark buff or light brown colour.

Some of the materials of which these garments are made are of great beauty, but in all of them there is evident a totally different taste in the use of colour from that exhibited by the pagan races. The scheme of colour is as a rule extremely severe and restrained. While the gorgeous cloths of Ashanti glow with the hues of the peacock's plumage, the finest fabrics from the northern cities present a plain ground of creamy white or some quiet neutral shade, upon which a few spots of brilliant colour are introduced with great judgment and severity of taste, and with a very fine effect.

The most remarkable example of this garment that I ever saw was worn by a merchant whom I met in North Ashanti. It was of fine white cloth entirely covered with minute Arabic writing. A garment of this kind is to be seen in the South Kensington Museum.

The construction of the tobe in its simplest form will be gathered from the above description, by which it will be seen that it is very similar in principle to a poncho. The forms, however, in more general use are somewhat more developed. For the sides are joined for some distance from the bottom, and rudimentary bell sleeves added. These sleeves as they completely cover the hands, are generally worn turned on to the shoulder so that a part or the whole of the arm is exposed.

Generally the tobe forms the only covering of the upper part of the body, but sometimes a shirt is worn under it, a quite simple affair like a small tobe without sleeves.

The *wondo* or drawers are equally simple, being made from a single piece of cloth about two fathoms long and half a fathom broad. The ends of this are joined and the lower edges sewn together so that a wide-mouthed bag is produced; then a string is run round the mouth of the bag, and a pair of holes made in the bottom, near the corners, and the garment is complete. When in use the feet are thrust through the holes, the mouth of the bag drawn tight round the waist, and the superabundant material at the bottom drawn up between the legs, an arrangement that gives it rather a slovenly and clumsy appearance.

The best wondo are made from the blue-grey "Guinea-fowl" cloth and are elaborately embroidered with a narrow cord or braid which is almost invariably of a bright green colour.

Among the Wongáras of the lower class both tobes and drawers and indeed most other articles of clothing are either white or some shade of plain indigo blue.

The head coverings of the male Moslems present considerable variety. The form most in vogue amongst the Wongáras of Jáman is a cylindrical cap of cotton cloth about twelve or eighteen inches high, which is worn with the end hanging down on one side like the cap of a brewer's drayman. It has a smart and rather jaunty appearance and combines with its ornamental function that of a supplement to the capacious pocket of the tobe.

A somewhat more pretentious form is a tall red cap or fez which is imported (probably from Tripoli), and which

perhaps formed the model from which the local cotton cap was copied. It is a foot or more in height and has a stalk at the summit, but no tassel. A fez of very similar form is imported by the Europeans on the Coast for trade purposes. The fez is sometimes worn alone, but more usually it forms the basis of a turban, the construction of which presents two types. In one which is generally used by the Wongáras, a long narrow cloth is twisted up into a kind of rope and is wound round and round the head almost horizontally: in the other the cloth is wound not only round the head, but its folds are carried round the face and under the chin so that the face is entirely hidden with the exception of a narrow strip at the level of the eyes.

This "litham" or face-cloth is a Tuarek fashion, but has been generally adopted by the Hausas, who call it *ráwani* (which means literally a bandage and is applied also to the turban), the Fulas and other Mahommedan peoples. A favourite form of litham among the Hausas and Fulas is the *ráwani bakki* or black face-cloth, which is a thin fabric dyed an intense blue-black with indigo, and so charged with the dye that its surface is quite glossy and iridescent. The litham is sometimes worn so as to leave the face uncovered from the brow to just below the under-lip, but by the more dandified Hausas and Fulas it is drawn completely over the face. It then imparts to the wearer a very strange and spectral appearance, and especially is this the case with the *ráwani bakki*, whose wearer is often entirely clothed in sombre blue-black. The effect of the narrow slit through

which peer a pair of lustrous, restless black eyes, the edges of the lids blackened and shining with powdered antimony, is quite startling.

Hats are worn by the Moslems in considerable variety, the material being invariably a very fine, close and strong wicker-work, usually bound and ornamented with leather. These hats are wrought with surprising skill, and not only is the wicker-work so close as to effectually keep out the sun and even rain, and so strong as to last for years, although subjected to the rough usage entailed by caravan life, but they are often so handsomely coloured and tastefully decorated as to become veritable works of art. The shapes adopted are various, but far the commonest and the most characteristic is that having a dome-shaped head-piece and a wide circular brim sloping somewhat downwards towards the edge. A peculiarity of this form is that the head-piece narrows somewhat as it approaches the brim. Other forms present the shape of a wide extinguisher. These hats are generally much larger than the head, and some are of enormous dimensions, being intended for use principally as sunshades and to be worn loosely over the turban. For greater convenience they are generally provided with a long leather strap which hangs down on to the chest when the hat is on the head, and if the wearer wishes to be relieved of the weight of his hat for a time he pushes it over the back of the head when it falls on to his shoulders, being retained in position by the strap.

The well-dressed Mahommedan seldom goes barefooted,

which indeed he need hardly do when he can buy an excellent pair of sandals for two hundred *kurdi* (about two pence), or a well-made pair of slippers for six or seven hundred *kurdi*, (sixpence or sevenpence).

The sandals are imported from Hausa and are nearly all made in Kanu. The soles consist of several layers of untanned cowhide, and the lowermost generally has the hair on it. The upper surface of the sole which is in contact with the foot is of fine red leather with black-stained decoration and impressed designs executed with a punch, and the straps which meet on the instep are of the same material. At the meeting-point of the instep-straps is a thong of leather which passes between the great and second toes and is fastened into the centre of the sole. This thong is essential to the neatness and comfort of a sandal, for it holds the latter tightly against the sole of the foot and prevents that tendency o trail and flop on the ground, which is so noticeable in the thongless sandals worn by the members of some European religious communities.

These Hausa sandals are to be met with in all the markets of West Africa. They are in common use in the Coast towns, Accra, Cape Coast, Elmina, etc., as well as in the towns of Ashanti. The sandals worn by King Prempeh appeared to me to be of Kanu workmanship, although they had apparently received some decorative touches from a local artist. Like other articles of dress the sandals have in many cases a considerable amount of ornamentation bestowed upon them: the straps may be covered with

coloured designs or replaced by a lacework of slender thongs, and their junction ornamented by an elaborate leather rosette either coloured or enriched with gold. As they appear in the markets the sandals are fastened together in pairs, sole to sole, by means of little pegs of untanned hide which are driven through the holes of the stitches.

Many of the better-class Mahommedans wear slippers of yellow or occasionally red leather, some of which are made in Hausa, but the majority by the Arabs. They are generally covered with "tooled" ornament, (*i.e.*, ornament executed with punches of various kinds as used by book-binders in this country,) consisting principally of small circles. Occasionally they are embroidered with silk in bright colours, but the effect of this is not so good as well-executed tooling. They are sewn together with very slender thongs of leather, as are also the sandals and every other kind of leather article in which sewing is employed.

The principal function of these slippers is evidently ornamental, for they are never worn on country roads, and even in towns are as often carried in the hand as on the feet. The fact is that shoes of any kind are not very comfortable in a hot climate, for they afford no more protection than sandals and they keep the feet unpleasantly warm and moist; moreover, the African shoe-maker apparently labours under a delusion (not entirely unheard of among his European fellow-craftsmen) that the human foot is a structure similar in shape to a somewhat narrow flat iron, and he designs his shoes accordingly. But whereas the European great

toe has by long suffering become partially resigned to its incarceration in a canoe-shaped case—only uttering an occasional protest in the form of a bunion—the corresponding African member more actively resents such imprisonment, hence the shoe is only worn on state occasions. Occasionally high boots of soft leather are worn by equestrians. These are elaborately decorated in various colours and are handsomely embroidered with narrow thongs of brightly coloured leather.

Persons wearing either slippers or sandals when paying a visit or making a call, invariably remove them, either carrying them in the hand or more usually leaving them at the door of the house, and it is needless to say that when visiting the Mosque the same custom is rigidly adhered to.

The above constitutes the ordinary clothing of a male Mahommedan, but certain supplementary articles are often added. There is, for instance, a kind of shawl, called by the Hausas *Zenne*, consisting of fine cotton with narrow stripes of silk interwoven, which is occasionally worn over the shoulder or around the neck. There is also a heavy rug or shawl of coarse wool, very closely woven, about the size of a Scotch plaid, which is used as a cloak, a bed covering, or a carpet to sit upon, the latter being apparently its primary object. It is greyish drab in colour, with a red band and a black ornament of Moorish design, with a few spots of bright colour, either at both ends or more usually at one only.

A more rare article of dress is the bernus or hooded mantle, of which I saw only one or two at Bontúku. These were of knitted wool dyed a dull orange, sparingly ornamented with purple, the margin of the mantle and the top of the pointed hood being enriched with purple tassels.

Passing now from articles of dress proper to ornamental accessories, we find these to consist (among the men) of charms, weapons and jewellery.

The charms or *saffis* I have already described.[1] The weapons which are carried about the person as ornaments are principally swords and daggers, although on state occasions a handsome spear often serves as a decorative adjunct.

The swords met with in the vicinity of Ashanti are principally of two types, the Hausa and the Wongára. The Hausa sword has a long straight two-edged blade, usually of native workmanship, upon which a certain amount of rough engraving is executed, and in the more costly specimens it is inlaid with brass. The inconveniently small brass hilt is in the form of a cross, and is generally engraved and ornamented with circular punch marks. The scabbard is of red leather stiffened, and covered with ornamental "tooling," and each end is covered with brass handsomely engraved and cut out in a perforated pattern, which is rendered more effective by placing behind the perforations pieces of bright coloured cloth or leather.

[1] P. 137.

The Wongára or Mandingo sword is generally curved in the blade (which is often of European make), has a hilt without a cross, and a leather scabbard ornamented in colour. Towards the point the scabbard is often much wider than the blade. The Wongára sword is generally slung by a leather strap, while the Hausa weapon has a thick tasselled silk sling a good deal like an old-fashioned bell-rope.

The daggers carried are of very diverse patterns, but the only one that calls for especial notice is the Hausa form that is worn on the arm, the sheath of which has attached to it a strong leather bracelet.

The spears, which are carried somewhat as Europeans carry walking-sticks, have engraved heads, either oval or furnished with one or more barbs; the haft is generally covered with leather, and ornaments of brass are affixed with nails at intervals. Many of the Hausas carry spears of a very elegant pattern, consisting of steel throughout inlaid with brass.

Among the most remarkable examples of what we may call ornamental weapons are the highly decorated war-axes. On these extremely interesting implements we may make a few remarks.

In some respects the grade of culture reached by the natives of West Africa is rather difficult to estimate, for the extensive relations that they have maintained for so long with more civilized peoples have resulted in the introduction among them of many articles and appliances quite foreign to barbarous nations. Here and there, however, there

survive among them certain implements and utensils of indigenous origin, the rude and primitive nature of which carry us back to the stone age. Particularly is this the case with the pottery, which is all unthrown (the potter's wheel being quite unknown hitherto) and very primitive in design, and such implements as hoes, axes and adzes. These latter are peculiarly interesting, for in the variety that are to be met with, the entire evolution of this kind of implement from the simple pointed stick to such ornate and highly finished articles as the war-axe of the Hausa or Mandingo may be traced; and it is curious to note that in all of them the pattern is that which has been in use among all primitive races, including the various neolithic peoples and the ancient Mexicans. For in all axes, adzes and hoes where a separate head or blade exists, this is inserted into the handle, which is perforated to receive it instead of being itself perforated to receive the handle, as in the corresponding tools of civilized peoples.

The hoe, which is the universal and, I believe, the only agricultural implement in use in West Africa, exhibits the simplest form. It is a small affair with a handle about eighteen inches long, and is used with one hand in the manner of a pick. In the plantations around Bontúku I saw men and women digging with wooden hoes rudely shaped from a branched stick. More commonly the hoe is formed of a stick having a knob at the end, through which is passed a narrow iron blade, and axes and adzes are made in the same way. Rude as these seem, they are often used

with remarkable skill. I remember watching a man at Bontúku who used an adze of this form to carve a wooden bowl, and I was surprised to observe the excellence of the work and the rapidity with which it was executed. Some of these implements are, as I have remarked, finished quite elaborately, but it is curious to notice that even in the most ornate specimens the primitive form evidently derived from the branched stick, is retained,

In the matter of jewellery the Mahommedans are much more sparing than the pagans. Rings of silver and copper are worn on the fingers, but not, as a rule, on the toes. They are of massive form, often incomplete or horse-shoe shaped, and elaborately ornamented with punch-marks. A curious and unusual form was worn by Sidichi at Bontúku: this consisted of a plain silver ring to which was attached a large pyramid of open-worked metal.

Most Mahommedans wear above the elbow a form of armlet which is peculiar in that it consists usually of two pieces. The materials are leather, marble, wood, ivory, glass, copper, brass and silver. Leather armlets are made of small thongs plaited together with great neatness and skill, and generally support a saffi. Leather bracelets carrying saffis are also frequently worn on the wrists.

Wooden armlets are almost invariably in two parts, fitting together by contiguous flat surfaces. The wood used is very hard, and dark in colour, and is polished to a perfectly smooth surface which is sometimes left without further decoration. Much more commonly, however, the smooth

surface of the wood forms the ground for an elaborate inlaying with brass and copper wire, the two metals being closely intermixed with a very pleasing effect. This inlaying is so close that the wood becomes completely encrusted in metal, and it is only on careful examination that the wooden basis can be perceived. Massive armlets of ivory are treated in the same manner, with the exception that the inlaying is with silver and copper instead of brass and copper, and that a portion of the ivory is allowed to show at the edges.

The curious glass armlets have already been described in detail as well as the mode of their manufacture. [1] Notwithstanding the apparently unsuitable nature of their material they appear to be greatly liked and are more commonly seen than any of the others.

Armlets of metal are not very much used, the reason probably being that brass and copper are not very pleasant to wear, and silver is somewhat costly. Of those that are made the workmanship is generally very poor. A cylindrical rod of metal is bent into the form of a hoop, the ends being brought together, but not joined, and its surface is then covered with rough engraving—generally executed with a file—and a pattern of punch marks.

The dress of the Mahommedan women is much less elaborate than that of the men and presents fewer points of interest. The ordinary body-covering is a cloth called by

[1] P. 231.

the Hausas, "*Túrkedi*", very similar in size and shape to the one described as being worn by the pagan women skirt-wise. An upper body-cloth is also occasionally worn, but in general the *túrkedi* forms the only covering of the trunk, its upper edge being drawn over the breasts or around the waist. The *túrkedi* is dyed with indigo in alternate stripes of light and dark blue, and in some specimens a small quantity of red yarn is introduced, imparting a purple tinge. Among the Hausa women the scantiness of covering on the upper part of the body is compensated for by a large veil or shawl *(zenne)* which is worn over the head and envelopes the shoulders and back. This, like the *ráwani bakki* of the men, to which it is analogous, is dyed a deep blue black. It is of a much thinner texture than the *túrkedi*, and usually has narrow stripes of silk interwoven with the cotton.

Each nationality has its characteristic head-dress. The Hausa women draw the hair (previously combed out in the manner already described) up each side of the head and plait it together into a mass which forms a ridge along the top of the head, like a cock's-comb or the crest of a fireman's helmet. A considerable portion of this unbecoming excrescence is hidden by a broad handkerchief which is bound round the temples, and from under this a small plait protrudes in front of each ear.

The peculiar and unlovely *coiffure* of the Wongára women has been already described on page 176.

The Fula women commonly part the hair in the middle

and work it into two large plaits, the bases of which are confined by a handkerchief, while the ends hang down on the shoulders. The pure-bred Fulas are a comparatively fair Semitic people, some of them having grey eyes and straight light-brown hair, but most of the so-called Fulas met with in the neighbourhood of Ashanti and the Gold Coast are half-breeds, many of them indistinguishable from negroes. In the women of the former the hair is plentiful and the plaits often reach below the waist: in the black Fula women it is scanty and woolly in character, and the plaits are small and wiry as in the negro women.

The Mahommedan women seldom wear any covering to the feet, the luxury of sandals and slippers being mostly reserved for their more elaborately attired consorts. They are more sparing too in the use of rings and armlets, but these when worn are similar in character to those of the men. One ornament, however, seems peculiar to the women, and it is a very interesting one. This is a heart-shaped plate of carnelian, which is suspended round the neck, forming usually the central pendant of a string of beads. A similar but smaller ornament is in use among the Arabs, and both are evidently derived from the flint arrow-heads which in all ages and all parts of the world have been worn as charms. Necklaces have been found in Etruscan tombs, bearing a flint arrow-head as a pendant, and in the British Isles the custom was formerly prevalent and is not even yet extinct, of carrying one of these relics of our long-departed ancestors, mounted in silver, suspended round the neck as a charm.

While on the subject of personal adornment it may be well to say a few words respecting the artificial skin markings with which many African peoples ornament their persons.

There seems to be a general agreement among all nations, civilized and barbarous, that the human body as turned out by nature is a crude, unfinished production, distinctly lacking in ornamental qualities and requiring certain artificial touches to bring it up to the required standard of beauty. Here, however, the agreement ends, for the ideas that prevail amongst different peoples as to the nature of the embellishment of which the body stands in need present the most remarkable diversity. By certain Australian tribes the æsthetic ideal is realized by moulding the growing skull into a graceful sausage-like form, much admired by local connoisseurs. The Chinese lady of fashion is provided with an artificial club-foot: the natives of some West African districts file their teeth into a conical form that enables them to reproduce the engaging smile of the alligator: and the ladies of our own land constrict the thoracico-abdominal region until their bodies resemble the log-glass of the mariner, or the familiar egg-boiler.

Among peoples who, by reason of the scantiness of their clothing, habitually expose a large proportion of their person to public view, the custom widely prevails of producing upon the skin itself a temporary or permanent ornamentation. Thus the American Indian, on certain special occasions, paints his countenance in various startling colours, a prac-

tice that is not entirely unknown in Africa. Other races introduce pigments under the skin, forming permanent tattoo marks, as, for instance, the New Zealanders, by whom this process has been brought to the condition of a fine art: and the patterns thus produced, elaborate and elegant in design and diversified in colour, to a great extent fill the place of clothing.

Among the West African peoples the practice of producing permanent markings on the skin, although not carried to the pitch of elaborateness seen among the New Zealanders, is very prevalent, and the designs are often somewhat intricate.

These markings belong to three classes. 1. True tattoo marks. 2. Plain incisions into the skin. 3. Raised cicatrices.

1. Genuine tattooing is not common among the natives of West Africa, and where practised is of a very simple kind. The only examples that I can call to mind are the Krus, who tattoo a blue stripe about half an inch wide, down the middle of the forehead, reaching to the root, or sometimes to the tip, of the nose; and the Yorubas, some of whom tattoo a thin blue line down the centre of the forehead to the root of the nose.

2. Plain incised marks are much the most common forms of cutaneous embellishment to be found in West Africa, and like the other classes of marks, are used either to indicate the tribe to which the individual belongs or to set forth some fact connected with his position in his family

or his status as a slave. In some cases, however, the markings appear to be entirely ornamental in character, and these are generally situated upon the trunk or limbs, the face-marks having, I think, invariably some special significance. Examples of incised face-marks are to be found among the Accras (a small cross on each cheek under the eye, sometimes tattooed), the Fantis (three short lines on each cheek), the Moshis (five long lines on each side of the face, reaching nearly from the forehead to the chin, and a line slanting down from the ala of the nose on each side), the Dagombas (very similar to the Moshis), and the Gruinsis (three long lines on either side of the face).[1]

TRIBAL MARKS OF MOSHI.

The Ashantis alone among the peoples of the Gold Coast region have no marks of any kind.

Among the Ang-laws (or Awoonas) it is customary to distinguish certain members of the family by characteristic face-marks,—the elder of twins, for instance, being distinguished by an oblique line passing downwards from the ala of the nose,—and I believe this custom exists in other tribes.

[1] I am somewhat uncertain about the Gruinsi marks, for so large a proportion of those that are met with are slaves and distinguished by various slave markings, that it is not easy to ascertain what are the real tribal marks.

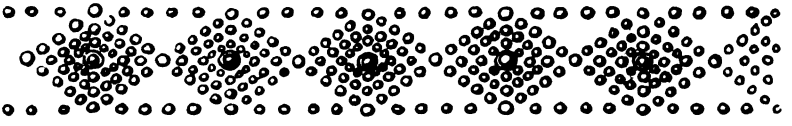
The incised marks denoting the condition of a slave vary considerably, and they are often so numerous and extensive as to produce extreme disfigurement. Among the Gruinsi slaves a common form is a series of three broad lines radiating from the outer angle of each eye, in addition to the ordinary lines on the cheeks.

Incised marks, or linear cicatrices, are not confined to the face, although, as I have said, the face-marks are the most important, but are to be found embellishing various regions of the body. In some cases a broad band of incised ornament encircles the waist: in others the back or abdomen is to a great extent covered. Now the ornament surrounds the base of the neck or covers the chest; and again the limbs, particularly the arms, become the subjects of ornamentation. The designs thus executed are often of great intricacy, the prevailing patterns being of the zig-zag and herring-bone type, and were they executed on a more suitable material they would not be without some decorative merit.

INCISED MARKS ON THE FACE OF A GRUINSI SLAVE.

3. The third class of marks, the raised cicatrices, are somewhat rare on the Gold Coast, but among the peoples in the vicinity of Bontúku I met with numerous examples both in the form of tribal and slave marks. The method of their production is as follows. An incision of the required

size being made into the skin, the resulting wound is filled with sand or other irritating matter, by which it is prevented from healing, at the same time keeping up an abnormal amount of reparative action. When the wound is at length allowed to close, the scar becomes hypertrophied and forms a nodular projection. In a European this result would not necessarily follow, but the African is peculiarly liable to keloid and other hypertrophic conditions of scars, as an example of which I may mention the fibrous growths in the ear-lobes to which I have already referred.



DESIGN EXECUTED IN RAISED BUTTON-LIKE SCARS ON THE NECK OF A GRUINSI SLAVE.

Notwithstanding this constitutional peculiarity it is extremely curious to observe the remarkable accuracy with which these raised scars are produced, and the complete control which the operators appear to exercise over their shape and size, which is made evident when we notice the nearly perfect symmetry of the marks on the two sides of the face, or the equality in size of the different tubercles going to form a pattern.

The most remarkable examples of this rather unpleasant form of cutaneous ornament are to be met with among slaves, several of whom I saw at Bontúku decorated with the most elaborate patterns. One of these had a broad

collar worked round his neck in a pattern of contiguous and concentric lozenges, another had a somewhat similar design produced on his forehead, and many had intricate patterns covering their chests. Among the tribal marks of this kind I may mention those carried by the natives of the Jímini district to the north-west of Bontúku, which consisted of a small circular tubercle about the size of a sixpence, above each eyebrow, and an elongated projection on the cheek, below each eye. These are very well shown on the wooden Sakrobúndi mask from Jímini, which also gives some idea of the local mode of wearing the hair. [1]

It commonly happens that extensive scars on a black skin, especially those produced by deep burns, present non-pigmented, *i.e.* white, patches, to the great disgust and annoyance of their owner, but I have never seen any abnormalities of pigmentation in the raised scars produced for ornamental purposes, which are invariably of the same colour as, or perhaps a little darker than, the normal skin.

[1] P. 151.

CHAPTER XV

ENGLAND AND ASHANTI

PART I.—RÉSUMÉ OF HISTORICAL FACTS

ORIGIN of the Ashantis—According to Bowdich—According to Dupuis—Author's View—A Tradition—First Notice of the Ashantis—The Conquest of Denkira—Osai Tutu—His Extensive Conquests—Osai Opóku—Osai Kwesi—Osai Tutu Kwamina—The Ashanti Stool—Events which determined the first Ashanti Invasion—Arrival of the Ashantis on the Coast—Collision between them and the English—Establishment of Peace—Disturbances by the Fantis—Bowdich's Mission to Kumasi—First Treaty—British Resident established at Kumasi—Aggressions of the English—Dupuis appointed British Consul at Kumasi—The Second Treaty—Its Repudiation by the Local Authorities—Transference of the Company's Possessions to the Crown—Appointment of Sir Charles McCarthy—His Hostility to Ashanti—His Disastrous Campaign—Important Results of the Defeat of the English—Defeat of the Ashantis at Dodowa—The Gold Coast reverts to the Company—Third Treaty—The Crown resumes possession—Governor Pine's Expedition—The War of 1873—Destruction of the Ashanti Federation—Decline in Importance of Ashanti—The Expedition of 1896—End of the Ashanti Kingdom.

IN the present chapter I propose to briefly review the relations which have existed in the past between this country and Ashanti, and to note their influence in the production of those conditions which at present exist. And as the known history of Ashanti consists of little more than the

record of such relations it will be well to preface this chapter by a short résumé of such historical facts as are available.

Of the early history of the Ashantis nothing is really known. Bowdich, who resided at Kumasi for several months in the year 1817, regarded them as immigrants who had separated from some tribe inhabiting a region lying to the south-east of the present territory, that is towards the sea-board. He states that, according to the traditions of the Ashantis, they invaded their present dominion, which was then occupied by a more civilized people, a portion of whose language they adopted and whose arts they learned.

Dupuis, on the other hand, who also resided at Kumasi, asserts that according to the traditions as met with by him, the Ashantis orgininally inhabited a tract of country (in common with the Jámans [Gamans], Denkiras and Akems) lying to the north of the present Ashanti, which he describes as Ghobago, Ghofan and Tonouma, from which they were driven southward into the forest by the Mahommedans. He states that the Coast regions were subsequently occupied by the Fantis, Denkiras, etc., who had previously formed part of the Ashanti nation.

On comparing the two accounts it appears to me that that of Dupuis is by far the more probable. To Bowdich's view there are several formidable objections.

In the first place there is no district of any size lying to the S.E. of Ashanti—the Ashanti of Bowdich included Akem and Assin—nor is there any tribe from which the

Ashantis might be considered as probable off-shoots; and east of the Volta we come upon the Efe races, who in appearance, customs and language bear no resemblance to the Ashantis. Nor is there any trace of the superior race which the Ashantis are said to have conquered and whose arts and part of whose language they are said to have adopted. The art of Ashanti is most distinctive; its architecture is quite peculiar and totally different from that of any of the other peoples.

The Ashanti language is, moreover, entirely different from that of any people of the northern district.

The view of Dupuis, on the other hand, although obviously merely speculative, is supported by several facts.

In the first place the process that he describes may be seen in operation in the district at the present time, for the Moslem tribes are gradually encroaching on the territories of the people lying to the south.

That the Ochi-speaking races of Fanti, Ahanta, Denkira and Akwapim are not the original inhabitants of the country is rendered probable by the fact that at various parts of the Gold Coast small isolated districts are met with in which a language of a totally different character from the Ochi (or Asante) is spoken. There are several very different dialects of this language if there are not several distinct languages, and although they appear to be gradually dying out, they are still to be found in Ahánta, Wassaw, in the south of Gomúa and Agúna, in the towns of Appám, Wínneba (Simpa) and Senía and parts of Akúapim, (Date and Kyerepong).

It is probable that the Ashantis, forced southward by the pressure of the more powerful (Mahommedan?) tribes to their north, occupied a region forming the northern portion of modern Ashanti; but as they increased in numbers they extended southwards until they reached the sea, driving before them and subjugating the aboriginal tribes whose language (or languages) have continued to exist in isolated spots, just as the aboriginal Celtic has lingered in remote places in the British Isles. To these aboriginal tribes may also belong the neolithic remains which have been found on the coast. Such an account would to some extent explain some of the peculiarities in the distribution of the Ochi language. This language by the natives is divided into Akan—which is regarded as the pure form of Ochi and is spoken in Ashanti and Akem—and Fanti or Mfantse, which is a collection of dialects differing widely, and evidently a corrupted form of the language. It is spoken in Fanti, Ahanta, Aowin, Tufel, Wassaw, Denkira, Akwápin, Akwámu and Adángme, all countries of the sea-board. Now it is evident that as the Ashantis (Asante-fo) extended their kingdom southward, the aborigines would be driven towards the sea; and when the conquerors reached the coast, there being no possibility of further retreat, the aborigines would be subjugated or annihilated. The supposition that they were subjugated by their conquerors is supported by the great differences in the Ochi dialects on the coast, which might well be brought about by the mixing of the Ochi with the language of the aborigines; and the existence of a

distinct language in various small regions near the sea also confirms this view.

There is a story given by some writers to the effect that the Fantis separated from Ashanti during a great famine; that the former living on herbs at the time, became known as Fanti or herb eaters—and the latter who lived on corn, as Santi or corn eaters. This story, which certainly has a very fabulous sound, is not borne out by an examination of the language. Herb in Ochi is not "*fan*," but "*fang*," and the verb to eat is "*di*"; but the Fantis pronounce their name *Mfantse* or *Fantse*, which bears very little resemblance to the asserted derivatives.

The Ashantis pronounce their name "Asante," and as corn is represented by the words *aburow*, *afi*, *kukuradabi* and *poporoku*, the derivation is not more easy to trace in this case.

Bowdich wrote, in addition to the narrative of his mission, a small book in which he endeavoured to prove some connexion between the Ashantis and the Abyssinians and Egyptians.

I have elsewhere mentioned that when at Kumasi I was strongly reminded of ancient Egypt and its monuments; but when I endeavoured to account for this impression I was unable to find that it was based upon any real resemblance excepting that the curious birdlike figures sculptured on some of the houses were singularly like some that I have seen in Egyptian monuments.

I suspect that Bowdich received a similar impression and

endeavoured, after leaving the country to "work up" a theory on the subject, for whereas his hypotheses are numerous and learned, his facts are extremely scanty, and his arguments in general more ingenious than convincing. Nevertheless his book is not without interest, and some of the analogies which he mentions are certainly striking.

The first authentic notice of the Ashantis is contained in the quaint letters of Willem Bosman, the chief factor of the Dutch fortress of St. George d'Elmina. These letters were apparently written in the first two or three years of the eighteenth century, for the first one commences "Sir, Your agreeable of *September* 1st, 1700, was seasonably handed to me by Captain N. N." etc., and they were published at Utrecht in 1704, an English translation appearing in the following year.

The reference to Ashanti occurs in the sixth letter, and I cannot do better than quote it at length.

"By what hath been said, you may imagine how Rich and Potent the Kingdom of *Dinkira* was.

"But a few Months past it was so entirely destroy'd that it lies at present desolate and waste. Certainly it cannot be unpleasant to inform you how such a fatal and sudden Destruction fell upon this so potent a Land, as well as whence their Ruin proceeded; which I am obliged to take from the Report of some of the *Negroes;* and the Event hath given me a sufficient Reason to believe they told Truth.

"*Dinkira*, elevated by its great Riches and Power, became

so arrogant that it looked on all other *Negroes* with a contemptible Eye, esteeming them no more than its Slaves; which rendered it the object of their common Hatred, each impatiently wishing its downfal; tho' no Nation was so hardy as to attack it, till the King of *Asiante*, injured and affronted by its Governour, adventured to revenge himself on this Nation in a signal manner.

"The occasion of which was this. *Bosiante*, the King of *Dinkira*, a young Prince, whose Valour was become the Admiration of all the *Negroes* of the Coast, sent some of his wives to complement *Zay*, the King of *Asiante;* who not only received and sustained them very civilly, but sent them back charged with several very considerable Presents to express his obliging Resentment of the grateful Embassy; And being resolved to return his Obligation, he some time after sent some of his Wives to complement the King of of Dinkira, and assure him of the great Esteem he had for his Person.

"These Ambassadresses were not less splendidly treated at *Dinkira*, being also loaded with Presents, but the King cast a wanton Eye upon one of them, and hurried on by exorbitant Lust, gratified his brutal Desire; After satiating of which, he suffered her together with the rest to return to their Country, and their injured Husband, who was informed of this Affront; But he took care to make the King of Dinkira sensible, that he would not rest till he had washed away the Scandal in his injurious Blood.

"After he was made sensible of the King of *Asiante's*

Resolution, knowing very well whom he had to deal with, he heartily wished he had not been guilty of the Crime, but since it was done, he offered him several hundred Marks of Gold to put up the Injury. The inraged Prince, deaf to all such Offers, prepar'd himself for a vigorous War, by raising a strong Army in order to make a Descent on *Dinkira*. And not being sufficiently stored with Gunpowder, he bought up great quantities on the Coast.

"The *Dinkirans* being foolish enough to assist him themselves, suffered his Subjects to pass with it uninterrupted through their Country, notwithstanding they knew very well it was only designed for their Destruction.

"Whilst he was making these Preparations the King of *Dinkira* died, which might encourage a belief that the impending Cloud of War would blow over.

"Whether the Governours of *Dinkira* were too haughty to implore a Peace of the injured *Zay*, or he instigated by the Enemies of that Country, is uncertain; But he still immovably persisted in his purpose of utterly extirpating the Dinkirans. And about the beginning of this Year, being compleatly ready, he came with a terrible Army into the Field, and engaging the *Dinkirans* who expected him, he beat them; but fighting them a second time, he entirely defeated them. The *Negroes* report, that in these two Battles above a hundred thousand Men were killed; Of the *Negroes* of *Akim* only, who came to the assistance of the Dinkirans there were about 30,000 killed; besides that a great *Caboceer* of *Akim* with all his Men, were cut

off. What think you, Sir? these are other sorts of Battles than are usually fought betwixt the Kings here; who if they should oblige all their Subjects even the lame, decrepit, and blind to come into the Field, could not raise such a number. The Plunder after this Victory took up the *Asiantines* fifteen days' time, (as is said, but perhaps largely enough) that *Zay's* Booty alone amounting to several Thousand Marks of Gold, as is affirmed by one of our *European* Officers, who was sent on some Embassy to *Zay*, and says, he had several times seen the Treasure....

"Thus you see the towring Pride of *Dinkira* in Ashes, they being forced to fly before those whom they not long before thought no better than their Slaves, and themselves being now sold for Slaves. We have not yet received the Particulars of the whole Affair; but this account of it coming to hand, I thought fit to impart it to you."

With the event thus quaintly recorded, the history of Ashanti as a dominant kingdom may be considered to have commenced. It is indeed probable that previously to this war it held somewhat of an ascendency over the neighbouring tribes; for although Bosman speaks of Dinkira as "looking on all other *Negroes* with a contemptible Eye," yet the fact that Bosiante offered to pay a fine in order to avoid a war seems to clearly imply that he regarded Ashanti as a superior power.

The King to whom Bosman refers as Zay,[1] and who is

[1] Ashanti Osée King. Bosman would seem to have had some knowledge of Ochi, for his spelling is much more correct than that of most later writers.

called by Bowdich "Sai Tootoo," by Dupuis "Sai Tootoo" and by Ricketts "Osai Tootoo," appears to have been not only a redoubtable warrior, but a man of considerable administrative talents, and is a character of prime importance in the history of Ashanti. Of the details of his reign it is not possible to furnish a reliable account as the authorities make such extremely conflicting statements. This sketch is derived mainly from the works of Bowdich and Dupuis, of whom the former is probably the more reliable, as his account is based upon the native traditions, while Dupuis refers constantly to certain mysterious "Moslem records," the nature of which he does not specify and which I am disposed to regard with extreme suspicion. [1]

Osai Tutu appears to have conquered Akem and Assin, and as we have seen, he reduced the powerful kingdom of Denkira to the position of a tributary. He is also said to have subjugated Jáman, Kwahu (or Okwau), Tufel and "a great extent of Country beyond the Tando (Tánno) river," probably Sehui; while according to Dupuis "the Desert (of Ghofan) was the only impediment to the progress of his arms North." By Bowdich he is said to be the founder of Kumasi, but according to Dupuis he merely enlarged that city and transferred to it the seat of Government which had previously

[1] These "Moslem records" make the date of the conquest of Denkira, 1719. But Bosman's account of it, from which I have quoted, was published at Utrecht in 1704. A reprint of the translation was published in London in 1721 and was seen by Dupuis who mistook it for the original edition. Had the first edition been published in 1721 it would have made the date of the conquest 1719—in complete agreement with the "Moslem records."

been sometimes at Kikiwhary (Chichewari), north of Kumasi, and sometimes at Begua (Bekwe) to the south of it. Both statements are probably substantially correct, for the name "Kumase"—the village under the Okúm tree—seems to indicate that it was at one time merely a small hamlet nestling under the shade of a single tree.

By the conquest and subjection of the powerful kingdom of Denkira and the annexation of the other countries above mentioned, Ashanti was at once raised to a level of importance above that of any of the surrounding kingdoms, and was fairly established as one of the first-rate powers of Upper Guinea, equalled only, perhaps, by the neighbouring kingdom of Dahome, which was too distant to come into direct competition with it.

A glance at the map will show the significance and importance of these great additions to the Ashanti territory, and when it is remembered that Osai Tutu also reduced the Mahommedan residents in his country, who had previously maintained an almost complete independence, to a civil equality with the pagan natives, it will be admitted that the title of Osai Tutu the Great, which has been applied to him, is not entirely inappropriate. He was killed in 1720 (or according to Dupuis in 1731) near the Pra river, during an expedition against Attoa, a district between Akem and Assin. The King was travelling with quite a small escort when he was attacked by a body of Assins who had been encamped at Akromanti, and he and most of his followers put to death. This tragic event still lives in the

memory of the Ashantis, whose most solemn oath to this day is that sworn by the head of Osai Tutu and Akromanti Saturday (Akromanti Memeneda), just as the people of Cape Coast still swear by McCarthy's Wednesday (Karti Wukuda).

On the death of Osai Tutu the recently conquered states appear to have revolted and endeavoured to throw off the yoke of Ashanti, but this rebellion was soon put down by the late king's successor, Osai Opóku (1720—1741). This King exchanged embassies with Dahome, conquered the distant kingdom of Dagomba, which thereafter became partially feudatory to Ashanti, and entered into a friendly alliance with Akwamu. It is stated by Dupuis that on the reconquest by Opóku of the kingdom of Akem, the "notes" (which appear to have been deeds in which the Europeans covenanted to pay annually a specified sum as rent for the land on which the forts stood) passed into the possession of the King of Ashanti who thereafter claimed to receive the amounts referred to.

Towards the end of this reign there occurred a great rebellion among the Ashantis themselves by which the kingdom was greatly endangered, but this was eventually put down.

Osai Kwesi (1741—1753). During this reign some of the subject states are said by Dupuis to have been induced by Dahome to revolt, but they were completely defeated by Osai Kwesi, who, when he discovered Dahome's share in the trouble crossed the Volta and engaged the Dahoman army.

The battle was not decided by night, and in the morning when the Ashantis were about to renew hostilities the king was deterred by the screeching of ominous birds and the warnings of his fetishmen.

He therefore withdrew across the river, but being impeded by the scarcity of canoes, a great part of his army was destroyed.

I shall pass over the events of the succeeding reigns as they have no direct bearing on the subject of the present chapter. Osai Kwesi was succeeded by Osai Kudjo (1753—1785), Osai Kwamina (1785—1793), Osai Opóku II (1793—1799), and Osai Tutu Kwamina (who appears to have been also called Osai Bonsu, Diasibe, and Obohyeri) (1799—1824).

The events which characterized the reign of this last king we must consider in some detail, for not only does the story of Ashanti at this point pass out of the region of rather hazy tradition into that of definite history, but it also becomes associated with that of our own country.

Osia Tutu Kwamina is of all the Ashanti monarchs the one on whom the Englishman should look with the most interest, for he was the first of the line who came into contact with Europeans, and by observing the attitude which he adopted towards them before the occurrence of those hostilities by which the relations of the two powers were subsequently embittered, we may learn what was the position that the Ashantis would have spontaneously adopted towards the white men.

The personal character of this king appears to have been little less remarkable than that of his great namesake Osai Tutu, the founder of the kingdom. Succeeding to the throne at the early age of seventeen, he within a few months of his accession, gave evidence of his remarkable military talents in a campaign against the united forces of Ghofan and Ghobago, which he completely routed, and the enemy is reported to have left a hundred thousand killed and prisoners upon the field.[1]

Subsequently he engaged in a short war with Jáman which had again revolted, and it was, I believe, in this war that the celebrated gold stool of Jáman was captured.

The stool appears among the Ashantis and neighbouring peoples to be the emblem of possession, for the expression to "succeed to the stool" is applied not only to a king on his accession, but also to private persons when they inherit property. Hence a conquered kingdom is not considered to be finally subjugated until the Royal Stool has passed into the hands of the conqueror. It was for this reason, no doubt, that King Ajiman of Jáman exhibited such eagerness when he spoke to me of his desire to invade Ashanti and recover the Gold Stool, and this is also the probable explanation of the fact that in neither of the British invasions of Ashanti has this stool been allowed to

[1] The reader's attention is directed to these numbers as well as those given in Bosman's narrative of the Denkira war, cited above, both of which, it cannot be doubted, are monstrous exaggerations. The tendency here and elsewhere exhibited in native reports to exaggerate numbers should not be lost sight of in considering those which relate to human sacrifices.

fall into the hands of the invaders. The emblematic character of the stool may also account for the remarkable uniformity which is observable in the pattern of these articles, the form of which has probably been fixed by tradition; for although the fancy and invention of native artificers find such free play in the design and construction of most articles of use and ornament among the Ashantis, it is quite rare to find a stool which in any way departs from the traditional design; in fact the only example which I am acquainted with is one in which the seat is borne by conventionalized human figures, which was for many years in a house belonging to one of the principal families of Elmina, and is now in my possession.

By Osai Tutu Kwamina the Kingdom of Ashanti appears to have been brought to the zenith of its power, and during his reign friendly embassies were sent by Abome, Salaga and Yendi, the capital of Dagomba; but in this reign also occurred the first of a series of events which culminated after the lapse of nearly a century in the destruction of the Kingdom.

In describing the circumstances that brought this monarch into contact with the Europeans I shall, at the risk of wearying the reader, enter somewhat into detail, for only by taking into consideration all the circumstances can a fair judgment be formed of the respective merits of the different parties. It has frequently been remarked that the most momentous events in the lives alike of men and nations are commonly determined by quite trivial antecedents,

and of this truth no better example could be adduced than that which is afforded by the decay and final destruction of the Ashanti nation, a catastrophe which may be clearly traced to an occurrence of no importance outside the village in which it took place.

The events which led to the first collision of the Ashantis with the English are set forth at length by Meredith,[1] who was second in command at Annamabú Fort at the time, in a graphic narrative, the impartiality of which cannot be too highly commended, and from this work the following account is derived.

The country of Assin was at this time (1805) divided into two states, of which one was governed by the chiefs Chebu and Kwaku Apute and the other by King Amu.

A certain wealthy native of Amu's town having died, was buried, and as is customary in such cases, a considerable amount of treasure was deposited with the corpse; but one of Chebu's men having discovered this, watched his opportunity and robbed the grave, whereupon Amu sought redress of Chebu and Apute.

These chiefs, however, refused to take any steps in the matter, and Amu then laid the case before the King of Ashanti, Osai Tutu Kwamina, who summoned all the parties before him. When he had heard the facts the King gave judgment in favour of Amu, and detained Kwaku Apute as a hostage until restitution should have been made,

[1] An account of the Gold Coast of Africa, with a brief history of the African Company, London, 1812.

but Kwaku Apute escaped and refused to abide by the King's decision.

Upon this King Amu attacked the town of Chebu and Kwaku Apute and routed their followers. The King of Ashanti now intervened and called the parties together with the object of settling the dispute, but while the negotiations were proceeding Kwaku Apute sent secretly to Chebu to obtain an armed force. Another battle followed, in which Apute was defeated and the man who committed the theft killed.

The King of Ashanti again interposed and sent one gold manilla [1] to Amu and one to Apute, directing them to make peace. Both chiefs agreed to obey the King's commands and accepted the manillas, and Amu abstained from further hostilities; but Apute attacked him again and drove him from his town. Amu then obtained the assistance of allies and attacked and defeated Apute.

The King of Ashanti interfered the third time, sending to Amu two gold swords and a gold axe and commanding him to make peace with Apute. Amu expressed his willingness to obey the King, but he was once more attacked by Apute, who also murdered the King of Ashanti's messengers.

This last atrocity completely exhausted the King's patience, and he declared war against Chebu and Apute who thereupon fled and took refuge in Fanti.

The King of Ashanti now despatched messengers to Akum,

[1] "Manillas" were heavy metal rings which took the place of coins among many of the West African peoples.

chief of Essekuma in Fanti, with a present of twenty ounces of gold, requesting permission to enter Fanti in pursuit of the criminals. He gave a solemn undertaking that his men should not molest the Fantis and assured Akum of his pacific disposition towards them, his only object being to secure Chebu and Apute. But the Fantis absolutely refused either to give up the fugitive chiefs or to allow the Ashantis to enter their country.

It being obviously impossible to allow two such dangerous rebels as Chebu and Apute to remain at large on the borders of his kingdom, the King of Ashanti prepared to take vigorous measures for securing them. By his orders Appe Duga, one of his generals, collected a large force and gave battle to the combined armies of the two chiefs and the Fantis, completely defeating them. On the following day Chebu and Apute having rallied their followers, joined with a fresh force of Fantis and again engaged Appe Duga and were again defeated. Among the prisoners taken by the Ashantis was Atia, Cabbocier of Abra, the capital of Fanti. A large ransom was offered for him, but was refused by the Ashanti general, who committed him to the care of Akum, the chief of Essekuma, by whom he was permitted to escape.

Kwaku Apute now sent to the King of Ashanti offering to accept the conditions which he had laid down, "provided he would discharge his debts on his return home."[1] To

[1] Meredith.

this remarkable proposition the King agreed, and sent messengers with various presents to Chebu and Apute, who accepted the gifts and beheaded the messengers. This villainous act of treachery so exasperated the King that he "vowed eternal war against the aggressors" and recommenced active preparations for the campaign.

In order to enable his troops to march towards the South the King contracted with Akum, the chief of Essekuma (whom he had pardoned for his treason in permitting Atia to escape), to supply them with provisions. On six occasions Akum fulfilled his contract honestly, but on the seventh he captured about a thousand Ashantis who had been sent for provisions and sold them (probably to the Europeans on the Coast). This was in March or April 1806. In revenge for this treacherous act the King of Ashanti attacked Akum and defeated him, after which the Ashanti force commenced to advance towards the coast, defeating the Fantis in every engagement.

Meanwhile Chebu and Apute had taken refuge in the sea-side town of Annamabú in which one of the British forts was situated, and were received by the people of the town, who promised to protect them against their pursuers. At this period (May 1806) the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, being under some apprehension for the safety of the British Settlements, was inclined to send a flag of truce with a message to the King of Ashanti in the hopes of coming to some arrangement, but the Annamabús (who were consulted on the measure) objected to it and refused

to permit the Governor's messengers to proceed inland, and the design was consequently abandoned.

Shortly after this a division of the Ashanti army reached Kormantain, drove out the inhabitants and seized and occupied the Dutch Fort, in which the Ashanti commander took up his residence.

When matters reached this pass Mr. White, the Governor of Annamabú Fort, despatched a messenger with a flag of truce to the Ashanti commander of the division, requesting to be informed as to the King's purpose in coming to the coast. To this message the Ashanti General, who had probably been informed of the encouragement the Fantis had received from the English, replied that he would furnish the required information when the Governor should send him twenty barrels of powder and a hundred muskets. Mr. White behaved politely to the Ashanti messengers and gave them refreshment after receiving their message. He offered to mediate between the Ashantis and Annamabús, but declined to furnish the powder and muskets demanded, and informed the messengers that if their army came with hostile intentions near the Fort it would be fired on. On the return of the messengers to their camp, Mr. White and Mr. Wilson, "a gentleman not in the service," considered it necessary to accompany them nearly to their quarters as it had been ascertained that the Annamabús intended to violate the flag of truce and murder them.

The Annamabùs, who had previously displayed such an extremely bellicose disposition and had so resolutely opposed

all propositions of mediation, now that the invading army was within a march of the town became suddenly seized with panic, and appealed to the white men for protection. To this appeal the Governor replied that if the King of Ashanti intended to attack the town, he would give them all the assistance and protection in his power, and he proceeded to superintend the organization of a defensive force. Thus the English, who, it will be remembered, were merely tenants of the Fantis and had no protectorate over them, abandoned the position of a neutral power and definitely pledged themselves to a course of action hostile to the Ashantis.

In about a week the Ashanti commander (the King of Denkira) sent forward a body of troops to occupy the village of Aga, on a point about one mile eastward of Annamabú.

On the 14th of June nearly the whole of the Annamabú force attacked this body, and after prolonged fighting, the Ashantis retired in excellent order, retaining possession of a part of the village from which the Annamabús could not dislodge them.

On the following morning (16th of June) the whole of the Ashanti army moved forward upon the town, driving the Annamabús before them like a flock of sheep. As soon as they came within range of the guns of the Fort the English opened fire on them, and the Ashantis thereupon directed their efforts towards the stronghold of the white man.[1]

[1] Mr. Dupuis was informed by the King that he had never any intention of of attacking the Castle; that, in fact, he did not attack it until the English

Their attack on the fort we are told by Meredith (who, as I have observed, was second in command on this occasion) was most gallant, for, notwithstanding that "twenty, thirty or even more fell with each discharge of grape," they continued to advance to the very muzzles of the guns and only drew off as evening approached. The slaughter in this terrible engagement (which lasted from eleven in the morning to six in the evening) was enormous, for Meredith assures us that no less than eight thousand Fantis perished, while of the Ashantis the loss was stated by the King to amount to three thousand. Moreover, the gallant little garrison of the Fort was reduced to such extremities that it would have been impossible for it to have sustained another day's fighting, and the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, learning the state of affairs, sent a message by sea, directing Mr. White to send a flag of truce to the King of Ashanti.

On the following morning, just as the Ashantis were preparing to renew the attack, "a white flag was accordingly lowered over the wall, accompanied with the national colours," and this pacific demonstration was received with loud acclamations not only by the officers of the Ashantis, but also by the fighting men. Two soldiers were now sent off with the flag of truce to the King's camp, "and here we cannot forbear remarking," observes Meredith, contrasting the besiegers with the treacherous and untrustworthy

compelled him to do so by opening fire upon him with the guns of the Fort; and that even then he had no wish to "carry matters to an extremity against the whites."—Narrative of a Residence in Ashantee.

Fantis, "that although the Ashantees are so remote from polished or civilized nations, they seem to be not unacquainted with the customs of a civilized people, as they are connected with the rules of war; for they paid every respect to the flag of truce."

The King presented a fat sheep to the two soldiers who carried the flag of truce, and sent in return three messengers who explained the events that had led to the war, and stated that the King was prepared to enter into negotiations for the establishment of peace.

In the meantime the chiefs Chebu and Kwaku Apute, by whose misdeeds the war had been occasioned, had taken refuge in Cape Coast, and the King intimated that as long as they were harboured by the British or Fantis no settlement could be arrived at. Accordingly Colonel Torrane, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle and the British Settlements, caused these two scoundrels to be arrested; Kwaku Apute made his escape, but Chebu was handed over by the Governor to the King.

After this, two palavers were held by Governor Torrane and Osai Tutu Kwamina, and the conditions of peace having been agreed upon, on the 1st of July the King withdrew his army and returned to Kumasi. At one of the palavers Meredith was present, and his impressions of the Ashanti King are not without interest. "He was of the middle size, well formed, and perfectly black, with regular features and an open and pleasing countenance. His manner indicated understanding and was adorned with gracefulness;

and in all respects he exceeded the expectations of every person. His dress was plain; it consisted of a piece of silk wrapt loosely around him; a wreath of green silk ornamented his head; his sandals were neatly made and curiously studded with gold."

Governor Torrane, to judge by his letters at this time and his conduct of these negotiations, was a man of considerable ability and discretion. He displayed remarkable tact in dealing with the King, and appears to have fully grasped the importance to British commerce of amicable relations with Ashanti; in which respect he and Governor Maclean stand almost, if not quite, alone among the British Governors of these Settlements. Had the policy which he inaugurated been followed by his successors it is extremely probable that no further troubles would have occurred between Ashanti and England.

On this occasion there does not seem to have been any treaty executed, although a temporary arrangement was made by which the British residing in the various forts were secured from molestation by the Ashantis as long as they preserved neutrality. It was the King's intention to return to Annamabú, after a journey down the leeward coast, to make "arrangements relative to the future welfare of the country and the regulations of trade," but an outbreak of sickness among his troops rendered it necessary for him to return to Kumasi without delay.

As soon as the Ashantis had retired from the sea-board the Fantis commenced to make war upon Elmina, Accra

and other native states, partly from motives of tribal hatred and partly for the sake of plunder, until in 1811 "the King of Ashanti hearing by a message from the Governor of Elmina, how troublesome the Fantees were to their neighbours, and knowing that the preservation of Accra was of importance to him, being the only maritime state his subjects could trade to without interruption; was determined to give them assistance." [1]

Accra appears at this time to have been the principal trading station of Ashanti, which is probably to be explained by the fact that it could be reached without passing through the country of the Fantis, for Meredith observes that it "is the only country on the Gold Coast that has a free trade with the interior; and is in general very much resorted to by the Ashantis. This free intercourse with that nation not only diffuses money among every class, but improves their manners, and renders them more civilized than their neighbours; for the Ashantees are evidently better acquainted with the rules of decency and morality, than any people we know of in this country."

The principal matters in dispute between the Fantis and Ashantis would seem to have been the persecution by the former of the allies of the latter, and especially the constant endeavours of the Fantis to prevent the Ashantis from trading with the Europeans. In this, as in all their other wars the Fantis were continually worsted, but with

[1] Meredith.

their characteristic obstinacy they refused to come to any amicable terms with their conqueror. "We believe," says Meredith, writing of this period, "the Fantees, particularly those who live inland, would be glad to come to terms with the Ashantees, or allow them a free communication with the Europeans on their coast, which is all the Ashantees require. But they are a vain and obstinate people, and will not yield without the interposition of another power, and that power is the English.

"The reader is already in possession of the Fantee character, which will inform him that these people are litigious, turbulent, and ungovernable; in constant hostility with the weak and innocent; prone to idleness, deceit and avarice."

Unfortunately the policy of the English, instead of being directed as Meredith suggests to the establishment of peace and free trade with the interior, tended, as we shall see, to the encouragement of the Fanti aggressions and to the banishment of Ashanti trade from our settlements; and in 1816, in direct violation of the understanding with the King of Ashanti, they once more made common cause with the Fantis against their conquerors.

The result of this policy was a blockade of Cape Coast Castle by the Ashantis, which lasted for a considerable time and was only raised on the payment by the Governor of a considerable sum in gold in satisfaction of the claim of the Ashantis for the arrears of the Fanti tribute.

With a view to restoring the good understanding that

had previously existed between the Ashantis and the English, a mission was despatched to Kumasi in the following year under the direction of Mr. James, the governor of the fort at Accra, who was accompanied in his undertaking by Messrs. Bowdich and Hutchison, writers, and Dr. Tedlie, an assistant-surgeon, who was afterwards killed in Sir Charles McCarthy's campaign. Mr. James was subsequently recalled by the Governor of Cape Coast Castle at the request of the other members of the party, who considered that his want of tact was likely to cause the collapse of the mission, and the conduct of the negotiations devolved on Bowdich, who seems on the whole to have been a prudent and observant man. It is to this mission, of which Bowdich published a detailed account, [1] that we are indebted for nearly all that we know of the Ashanti Kingdom in the days of its power and prosperity.

This embassy resulted in the signing of a treaty with the King of Ashanti, of which the following were the principal articles:—

1. That there should be perpetual peace between Ashanti and Great Britain and between the former and all African peoples living under the protection of the African Company's forts.

2. That no palaver should be considered to exist (at the time of the signing of the treaty) and that neither party should be regarded as having any claim upon the other.

[1] A Mission to Ashantee.

3. That the King of Ashanti should guarantee the people of Cape Coast from the hostility threatened by the people of Elmina.

4. That complaints of any injuries inflicted by the natives living under the protection of the Company's forts on the King of Ashanti, should be made by the latter, in the first place, to the Governor of Cape Coast Castle.

5. That a British officer should be permitted to reside constantly at Kumasi.

6. That the King of Ashanti should endeavour in every way to promote commercial intercourse between his people and the English.

7. That certain of the King's children should be placed in the custody of the Governor of Cape Coast Castle with a view to their being educated.

Having executed the above treaty, Mr. Bowdich, with Assistant-surgeon Tedlie, returned to Cape Coast Castle, leaving Mr. Hutchison as British Resident at Kumasi, where he remained until the end of the year 1818, when he was recalled to Cape Coast by the Governor.

About this time Mr. Joseph Dupuis, who as Consul at Mogador, had acquired some knowledge of the ways of African peoples, was appointed by the King of England to be British Consul at Kumasi.

When Dupuis arrived at Cape Coast Castle, the King

of Ashanti was absent from his capital, being engaged in suppressing a rebellion in Jáman; and presently a report reached the coast to the effect that the Ashantis had been completely defeated. This report appears to have been received with great satisfaction both by the Fantis and the British authorities, and the people of Cape Coast with a view to freeing themselves from the domination of the Ashantis, proceeded to enclose their town within a loopholed wall of clay, the extremities of which reached down to the beach on either side of the city. That these aggressive measures were taken with the full approval of the British authorities is clearly shown by the fact that the latter erected at the same time a Martello tower which was furnished with guns landed by Sir George Collier from H.M.S. "Tartar" which was then in the roads.

But the report of the defeat of the Ashantis turned out to be erroneous, and when the King on returning victorious from Jáman heard of these warlike preparations, he caused all intercourse between his people and the English to be stopped; and there ensued a state of partial hostility that lasted several months. At length the King sent down a mission to Cape Coast to demand satisfaction for the breach of the treaty that had been committed, and Mr. Dupuis, who had been detained at Cape Coast partly by illness and partly by the obstruction of the local Government for more than twelve months, took this opportunity to proceed to Kumasi, where he arrived on the 28th of February, 1820.

Notwithstanding the unfriendly conduct and want of good faith show by the English at Cape Coast, the King gave Dupuis a most favourable and friendly reception and treated him with the greatest kindness and courtesy during his stay at the Ashanti capital.

On the 23rd of March a second treaty was signed, very similar in character to the first. The King of Ashanti engaged that he would use all his interest and influence to promote commerce between his people and the English and to protect and further the interests of Great Britain, and, moreover, that he would, "if necessary, on all occasions march his armies to any part of the country when the interests of Great Britain might require their aid and assistance." [1]

He withdrew his claim for compensation for the recent violation of the previous treaty, and agreed that all past differences between himself and any of the subjects of the King of England should be forgotten.

On the part of the British Government it was agreed that the right of the King of Ashanti to the sovereignty of Fanti was fully acknowledged, with the reservation that natives living under British protection should be answerable for any acts of aggression with which they might be charged, to the British authorities in the first place. [2]

It was also stipulated that a road connecting Ashanti with the coast should be kept cleared, the one half by the Ashantis and the other half by the English. [3]

[1] Art. 2. [2] Art. 5. [3] Art. 8.

The tenth article of this treaty (which is somewhat obscurely worded) is important and instructive. In it the Consul agrees to in future pay the "notes" himself as the King complains of the excessive prices charged on them by the authorities of Cape Coast Castle. These "notes" as I have already had occasion to observe, were deeds in which the British authorities agreed to pay a certain annual sum as rent for the land on which the forts stood.

This article then makes it clear that the British authorities had been in the habit of paying this rent to the King of Ashanti, thus admitting their position as his tenants; and it indicates, incidentally, that the merchandise in which the rent was paid was not of the value that it was supposed to represent.

The narrative of Dupuis makes it evident that Osai Tutu Kwamina felt the strongest desire to establish a firm alliance between his kingdom and Great Britain, and that his admiration of the white man was unbounded. And when we consider the impetus that such an alliance would have given to British commerce and the extent to which it would have promoted the civilization of the country, we cannot sufficiently deplore the events that followed.

When Dupuis returned to Cape Coast, having, as he believed, brought the affairs of the country to a most satisfactory settlement, the local government absolutely repudiated the treaty and refused to abide by its terms or to recognise the sovereignty of the King of Ashanti over the Fantis, to which they contended he had no just title, and this view

was also taken by Sir George Collier, the commander of H.M.S. "Tartar" which was then in the roads. This repudiation of the claims of the King of Ashanti over the Fantis, which has since formed the basis of the British policy on the Gold Coast, has been generally regarded with an approval which I find difficult to understand. For in the first place, Mr. Dupuis was appointed directly by the King of England to his Consular office quite independently of the African Company, and it does not appear that either the Company's officers or Sir George Collier had any power to question the validity of the treaty executed by the Consul, which should properly have been dealt with by the authorities at home; and in the second place there does not appear to have been any reason for contesting the King's claim to the sovereignty of Fanti since he had unquestionably conquered the country and received the submission of the people; and if it be contended that the conquest of a country does not confer on the conqueror the right of possession, it is only necessary to point out that Ashanti has recently been annexed by Great Britain to show that such a right is claimed in respect to our own conquests. Moreover, it does not appear that the Fantis in general, who were really the interested parties, disputed the claim of the King of Ashanti, for on more than one occasion they subsequently fought on the side of the latter against the English.[1]

[1] Rickett's "Narrative of the Ashantee War," pp. 10 and 20.

Dupuis now determined to return to England in the hopes that the home government would either confirm the treaty or come to some final terms with the King of Ashanti. He was accompanied to Cape Coast by several Ashanti Chiefs who had been sent by Osai Tutu Kwamina as ambassadors to the King of England; but these ambassadors Sir George Collier refused to convey to England, although he consented to receive the Consul as a passenger.

Before leaving for England, Dupuis sent a message to the King of Ashanti, acquainting him with the difficulties that had unexpectedly arisen, and begging him to allow the negotiations to remain in abeyance for the space of eight months, in the course of which time he promised that His Majesty should receive a communication from England. To this arrangement the King agreed and Dupuis then sailed for England, leaving the Ashanti ambassadors to wait at Cape Coast for the promised message.

The King waited patiently for ten months, but at the expiration of that time, having received no communication from the British Government, he withdrew his Ambassadors from Cape Coast; and thereafter the Ashanti merchants gradually ceased to visit the British Settlements, transferring their trade to the Dutch and Danish forts, especially to the Dutch port of Elmina.

About this time (1821) it was decided by the Government of Great Britain to abolish the African Company and attach their forts to the West African Settlements, and shortly afterwards Brigadier-General Sir Charles McCarthy

was appointed Governor-in-Chief of the British Settlements between twenty degrees north latitude and twenty degrees south.

Sir Charles appears to have spent several years at Sierra Leone and the Gambia and was a popular and energetic governor; but his career on the Gold Coast was most disastrous, and his conduct was characterised by a degree of perversity and lack of intelligence that is perfectly astounding.

It cannot be said that McCarthy erred from want of knowledge, for he had met Dupuis in London and had received from him a full account of the recent events on the Gold Coast; and Dupuis states that the new Governor appeared at that time to be fully impressed with the importance of establishing friendly relations with Ashanti. But from the time of his landing on the Gold Coast in March 1822 he commenced to busy himself in native palavers, inciting the different tribes of the quarrelsome and disunited Fantis to fight with one another, and stirring up the natives of the littoral countries to make war upon the Ashantis.

In 1823 the wise and forbearing king, Tutu Kwamina, died and was succeeded by his brother Osai Yau Akoto. About this time (Feb. 1823) a native sergeant of the Royal African Corps was kidnapped by some Ashantis and murdered at the Fanti village of Dunkwa. There is no clear evidence that the King of Ashanti was in any way responsible for this act, which appears to have arisen out of a private

quarrel between the sergeant and an Ashanti merchant; and there can be no doubt that the Fantis were at least accessories to the crime. But Sir Charles McCarthy resolved to make it a pretext for a definite campaign against the Ashantis and commenced preparations without delay.

Early in the year the hostilities commenced, and in the first engagement the British forces were defeated near Dunkwa by the combined forces of the Fantis and Ashantis.

In June the Fanti town of Essekuma was destroyed by Captain Laing, and in August the Chief of that town, Kwasi Amonkwa, was defeated by the allies of the English.

In the same month Captain Laing with native allies attacked a body of Ashantis and Fantis near Essekuma, who retired without giving battle.

The remainder of the year was spent by Sir Charles in organising a native militia with which, and a few West Indian troops, it is said that he contemplated marching to Kumasi, but his admiring biographer, Major Ricketts, considers that he can hardly have been serious in meditating so preposterous an undertaking.

In January 1824 Sir Charles took the field against the Ashantis, and this last disastrous campaign was marked by the same perverse obstinacy and want of judgment as had been displayed in his civil government. He commenced by separating his little force into several divisions, one of which was shortly routed and demoralized by the enemy. Then he refused to believe the reports of the natives who

assured him that the main body of the Ashantis was close upon him, with the result that on the 21st he found himself near the village of Essamako confronted by fifteen thousand Ashantis, while the best part of his own troops under Major Chisholm were some days' march distant. This pitiful burlesque reached its culminating point when the infatuated commander in response to the war drums and horns of the enemy, "ordered the band of the Royal African Corps which had accompanied him, to play "God save the King" and the bugles to sound, he having heard through some channel in which he placed confidence that the greater part of the Ashantees only wanted an opportunity to come over to him. [1]

The Ashantis now opened fire and the action commenced in earnest. In about two hours' time it was discovered that the British troops had expended all their ammunition and that the carriers who had been entrusted with the reserve supply had not arrived. This untoward event probably had little influence on the issue of the fight, for not only were the allies hopelessly outnumbered, but their opponents were, man for man, superior in bravery and discipline; but it greatly accelerated their defeat, for as their fire slackened the Ashantis crossed the river which separated the combatants and surrounded the little force of the allies, whom they speedily overpowered. The allies now broke up and endeavoured to make their escape from the field, but a

[1] Narrative of the Ashantee War, by Major Ricketts, late of the Royal African Corps.

large proportion of them were either killed or captured by the enemy; of the twelve European officers, nine were killed, among whom was Sir Charles himself, and the remaining three (one of whom was taken prisoner by the Ashantis) were seriously wounded.

This engagement was in many respects the most critical and important that has been fought on the Gold Coast, for it marked the abandonment of the nominally neutral position that the English had hitherto maintained, and the signal defeat that they sustained established that feeling of bitter hostility towards the Ashantis which has ever since existed.

The Ashantis did not attempt to follow up this victory by an advance on the British Settlements, but nevertheless a state of chronic warfare supervened and this continued until the middle of the year 1826. On the 7th of August in that year the British and their allies once more met the Ashanti army in a great general engagement near the town of Dodowa, about twenty-four miles N.E. of Accra.

On this occasion the British forces, about 11,000 in number, were, after an obstinately contested battle, completely victorious, and the war was terminated by the retreat of the Ashantis to Kumasi.

Meanwhile, owing to the unfortunate policy of Sir Charles McCarthy and the disturbed state of the country to which it had given rise, the trade had dwindled to such an extent that the Government decided to withdraw from the

district and once more to leave the arrangement of its affairs in the hands of the merchants. The post of Governor now fell to the lot of Captain George Maclean (the husband of L.E.L. whose tombstone in the yard of Cape Coast Castle is still one of the venerated memorials of the Colony), by whose prudence and energy prosperity was at length to some extent re-established. But a considerable portion of the Ashanti trade had been permanently diverted to Assini, and at that port the French still reap the benefit of our dissensions with the great inland power.

By Maclean a treaty was concluded in 1831 with the King of Ashanti, in which the latter renounced his claims on the tribes of the littoral countries and lodged a sum of money and two hostages as security for his peaceful behaviour in the future.

Over the remainder of the history of our relations with this nation I shall pass rapidly, having dealt in some detail with those events which have appeared to me most significant in relation to our present subject. In 1843 the Settlements on the Gold Coast were once more taken over by the Crown in consequence of a (apparently groundless) suspicion that the Government of the merchants connived at the slave trade. In the winter of 1863—64 an expedition was sent by Governor Pine against the Ashantis, but no fighting occurred and the force was withdrawn after suffering severely from sickness.

Nothing of importance occurred from this date until the

outbreak of hostilities between the English and Ashantis in 1873. The causes which led to this war are extremely obscure, but it will be remembered that at the time the Dutch fortress of Elmina had been recently transferred to the English; and as the Elminas were old and staunch allies of Ashanti, and the Dutch, unlike the English, had always preserved friendly relations with that nation, it may be readily believed that the Ashantis viewed the change with no small disapproval.

Of the incidents of this war I need enter into no description; the campaign will be within the memory of most of my readers, and, moreover, detailed accounts of it have been published by members of the expedition; but it may be noted that the Ashantis were totally defeated at Amoaful on the 31st of January, 1874, and that a few days later the British forces entered Kumasi which they sacked and destroyed by fire. On the 13th of February a treaty was agreed at Fómmana, in which the King (Kofi Kara-Kari) renounced all claims on the protected tribes, engaged to protect traders in his country, to maintain a road to the Pra, to abolish human sacrifices and to pay a war indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold.

The King requested that the Queen would allow his son Kofi Enti to be educated in England, and his request was acceded to. The lad was sent to the Surrey County School, near Guildford, and when his education was completed he was given a post in Trinidad. He subsequently returned to the Gold Coast, where he received an annual allowance

of £120 and was given various kinds of employment under the Government of the colony. [1]

One of the first results of the English invasion of Ashanti was the revolt and separation of the tributary states. One after another they threw off their allegiance to their former master until the Ashanti kingdom was reduced to the state in which it existed at the end of the seventeenth century, before any of its conquests were achieved. From this period its power and influence gradually declined and with them the extensive commerce that it had formerly maintained with the nations of the far interior. That this disintegration of Ashanti was regarded with approval by the British Government there can be no doubt, for it was considered that the decline of its power and the decrease of its influences tended to promote the safety of the Gold Coast Colony; but although the Government claimed and exercised the right to interfere in the administration of the affairs of the country, especially in regard to its relations with the surrounding tribes, Ashanti maintained for many years after the war a position of nominal independence. In 1895, however, it appears to have been determined to definitely establish British rule in the country, and to that end an expedition was despatched which marched without opposition to Kumasi. The doings of this expedition are matters of quite recent history on which I need not dwell. It will be remembered that on the 20th of January, 1896, the King

[1] He was for some time my pupil in the hospital at Ketta.

Osai Kwaku Dua III, more familiarly known as Prempeh, together with his mother and other members of his family, and a number of chiefs, were seized, to be conveyed as prisoners to the coast, the palace looted and the suburb of Bantama burned. With the deposition and deportation of the King and the establishment of a British Resident, the history of Ashanti as an African Kingdom may be considered to be brought to a close.

CHAPTER XVI

ENGLAND AND ASHANTI

PART II.—RESULTS OF BRITISH POLICY

HOSTILE and Aggressive Nature of the British Policy—Explanation of this Attitude—Results of the destruction of the Ashanti Federation—Human Sacrifices—Exaggerated Reports—Effect of British Policy on Commerce—Commercial Importance of Ashanti—Old Caravan Routes—Civilizing Influence of Native Commerce—Importance of Native Trade to Europeans—Delusive Ideas regarding the Interior—Hindrances to Native Commerce caused by Annexation—Natural Productions do not compensate for Destruction of Trade—Conclusion, "It might have been."

FROM the foregoing brief sketch it will be evident that the attitude adopted by the English towards Ashanti has been, from the first, uniformly hostile. The efforts of King Tutu Kwamina to secure the friendship of the British Government were continually frustrated by the unreliable conduct of the local authorities and by the total disregard that they displayed for the treaties which had been executed: and the advent of Sir Charles McCarthy marked the commencement of a policy of open hostility which has been continued to the present day. During the whole period in which the English have been in relation with Ashanti

the goal of their ambition has appeared to be the conquest and destruction of that kingdom, and at no time does any serious effort appear to have been made to secure these brave, intelligent and industrious people as permanent allies of the British Crown. On the contrary, the English have from the first identified themselves with the debased coast tribes and especially with the quarrelsome, timid and indolent Fantis. With the unerring instinct of a professedly philanthropic nation, they have selected the sturdiest, most enterprising and most courageous tribe as the special object of hostility, and have consistently endeavoured, after the fashion too common among philanthropists, to secure in the most perfect manner the survival of the unfittest.

It was in accordance with this policy that, after the war of 1873, the tributary states of the Ashanti Kingdom were encouraged to revolt and claim their independence, it being rightly imagined that its disintegration into its component tribes would permanently destroy its power and influence.

And in accordance with this policy was the action of the recent expedition by whose agency the Ashanti Kingdom has been finally wiped out of existence.

The explanation of this policy is to be found in two very different sentiments, each characteristically British. [1]

[1] They are both pretty clearly expressed in a despatch of Governor Hill's quoted by Brakenbury. Writing in 1853, he observes, "I need not say that if it were not for the expense and exposure of the few white officers in this deadly climate, a contest with Ashanti and the destruction of that power would not only be a war of humanity and civilization, but it would open

One is that of the philanthropist whose sole object is the welfare of the negro, who yearns to introduce him to the blessings of civilization and the consolations of religion, and seeks to rescue him from the sufferings entailed by the imperfections of his nature. From his point of view the destruction of the power of Ashanti was necessary for the preservation of peace in the district and as a prelude to the introduction of civilization, as well as for the abolition of the practice of human sacrifice.

The other is that of the trader who imagined that the integrity of the Ashanti Kingdom constituted a serious hindrance to commerce, and who from purely selfish motives desired to see the native rule abolished, believing that such abolition would greatly enhance the prosperity of the Europeans.

Let us now consider whether the results of the breaking up of the Ashanti Kingdom up to the time of its final annexation have been such as were anticipated by either of these parties. To take first the view of the philanthropist who anticipated the establishment of peace, the abolition of human sacrifices and the introduction of some degree of civilization.

Before the war, the kingdom was extensive, powerful and fairly well organised. The various tributary states were to

the interior of this country to mercantile enterprise, and enable those now shut out, and under the yoke of those blood-thirsty people, to enjoy the blessings of a mild government, and hear the Gospel truth preached to them . . . ."

a great extent restrained from mutual warfare by the power of the central authority: extensive commercial relations existed with the great nations of the remote interior: and the relatively peaceful conditions thus maintained allowed of the cultivation of indigenous industries.

After the breaking up of the kingdom and the separation of the tributary states the disorganization was complete. The "emancipated" tribes and minor kingdoms, instead of settling down to peaceful pursuits, kept up more or less constant war with Ashanti and with one another, and the chronic hostilities thus arising rendered unsafe the caravan roads to the interior and periodically closed the trade routes to the coast. And meanwhile the local arts and industries were suffered to decay, and the general level of civilization was unquestionably lowered. The loss of life entailed by these continual intertribal wars was obviously much greater than that occasioned by the comparatively infrequent campaigns of the United Ashanti Kingdom, while their destructive effect on the indigenous civilization was immeasurably greater. Thus in two respects the destruction of the power of Ashanti produced results entirely the reverse of those anticipated: it tended to increase the amount of bloodshed and the resulting misery, and to lower the level of civilization.

With reference to the third object of the philanthropic party, the abolition of human sacrifices, it is quite certain that it was not attained: it is obviously impossible to judge whether any diminution took place, for the simple reason

that the evidence as to their original extent was totally valueless. For my own part I am inclined to think that they have been the subject of gross exaggeration, and this opinion I have found to be in agreement with that of the educated natives with whom I have spoken on the subject. It is easy to see how such exaggeration might occur. All the accounts of the great sacrifices have been obtained from native reports, and as I have already pointed out, the statements of natives with regard to numbers are totally unreliable in consequence of their tendency to exaggeration. Moreover, a large proportion of the reported "sacrifices" were nothing more than public executions, as clearly appears from Dupuis' account of the sacrifices at the custom of "Little Adai;" for having described the ceremony (of which he was not, however, actually an eye-witness) and stated the number of victims, as reported to him by a native, he goes on to remark that the greater number of these victims were really criminals whose lives were already forfeited by reason of their crimes.

To realize how a report of the kind once started grows like a rolling snowball, it is only necessary to recall the lurid stories of human sacrifice that appeared in some of the daily papers during the progress of the last expedition, —combined with accounts of hordes of "serpents" at Pra-su and other phenomena "new to science"—emanating from men who, strangers to the country, could have had, while attached to an invading force, no opportunities whatever of obtaining any reliable information on the sub-

ject. Some of these gentlemen referred to the existence of vultures at Kumasi as conclusive evidence of the prevalence of human sacrifices, regardless of the fact that they are equally numerous at Cape Coast, Sierra Leone and other places in West Africa, being in fact, the common scavengers of the district. Whenever a human skull or bone was encountered it was at once identified as a relic of human sacrifice, the implication being that all persons dying by any other means vanished into smoke at their decease.

But to whatever extent the custom of human sacrifice obtained before the destruction of the power of Ashanti, it is tolerably certain that the British interference produced no improvement. Indeed, it would have been very surprising if the Ashantis had, at the command of a foreign nation, abandoned what appears to be in their opinion a religious rite of prime importance in its influence on the welfare of their ancestors: especially when we consider that human sacrifices are still, or were until quite recently, offered in the British Protectorate [1] in spite of the efforts of the Government to suppress the custom.

To sum up: the results of the breaking up of the Ashanti Kingdom and the destruction of its power have been, up to the date of the annexation of the country, a distinct

[1] In case this should appear incredible I quote the following passage from a report on a mission to Atabubu, dated the 1st January, 1891, by Mr. G. E. Ferguson: "I regret to report to your Excellency that upon enquiry I found that the practice of human sacrifice still continues in Krobo, but that it is conducted with such secrecy, and with the connivance of those who would be expected to give information, as to evade successful criminal proceedings being instituted against the wrong-doers."

increase in the amount of war and bloodshed, and a deterioration of the native civilization without any apparent diminution of the bloody religious customs.

The interference of the British has in fact tended to increase the amount of human suffering in the district.

Such being the results of the British policy to the natives themselves, we may now consider what effect these changes in the condition of Ashanti have produced upon the commerce of the district as it affects Europeans.

We continually hear insisted on the great importance of "opening up the interior" and of establishing commercial relations with the great inland peoples.

It was probably to some extent with this end in view that the Ashanti federation was broken up, it being hoped that when this was accomplished communication with the interior would become more easy. It may be incidentally remarked that the reverse of this has happened, for, as Reclus [1] points out, and as King Ajiman of Jáman informed me, most of the interior trade that used to pour into Cape Coast is now diverted to Assini in the French Protectorate, the routes through Ashanti having become much less safe than formerly; but the thing that strikes one most forcibly in this view is the remarkable manner in which the commercial importance of Ashanti itself is ignored, that country being thus regarded as a mere barrier between the coast and the interior.

[1] L'Afrique Occidentale, p. 449.

The fact is, on the contrary, that Ashanti in the days of its power was one of the most important commercial centres in West Africa. It was the focus of a most extensive traffic with the Moslem nations of the far north and east. From Timbúktu and Jenne, from the land of the Tawareks, from Sokotu, Kano, Kachina and other Hausa cities; from Bornu by Lake Chad, even from the shores of the Mediterranean [1] the caravans wended their way to the great negro Kingdom where the precious *guru* or kola could be purchased. With these great African nations Kumasi was brought into communication by means of two main caravan roads; one leading from the east, from Bornu and Hausa and passing through Bórugu and Yendi (the capital of Dagómba) to Sálaga and Kantámpo; the other from Timbúktu, passing through Massina, Sofara, Júlasu, Kong and Bontúku to Kantámpo. There appears to have been a second Timbúktu road which, starting from Kábara, the port of Timbúktu, passed through Banya-gerra, Mandoli, and Wurga-duku, (the capital of Moshi or Mo-si) and joined the eastern road at Yendi; while at Sókoto or Kachina the same road was joined by the great caravan road from Tripoli.

Neither of these great roads actually entered Kumasi, for the Ashantis do not appear to have wished to make a market town of their capital; although according to the descriptions of Kumasi given by Bowdich, that city would appear to have contained quite a large floating

[1] In 1792 Mr. Lucas at Tripoli heard Ashanti spoken of as the destination of a caravan that was setting out from that city.

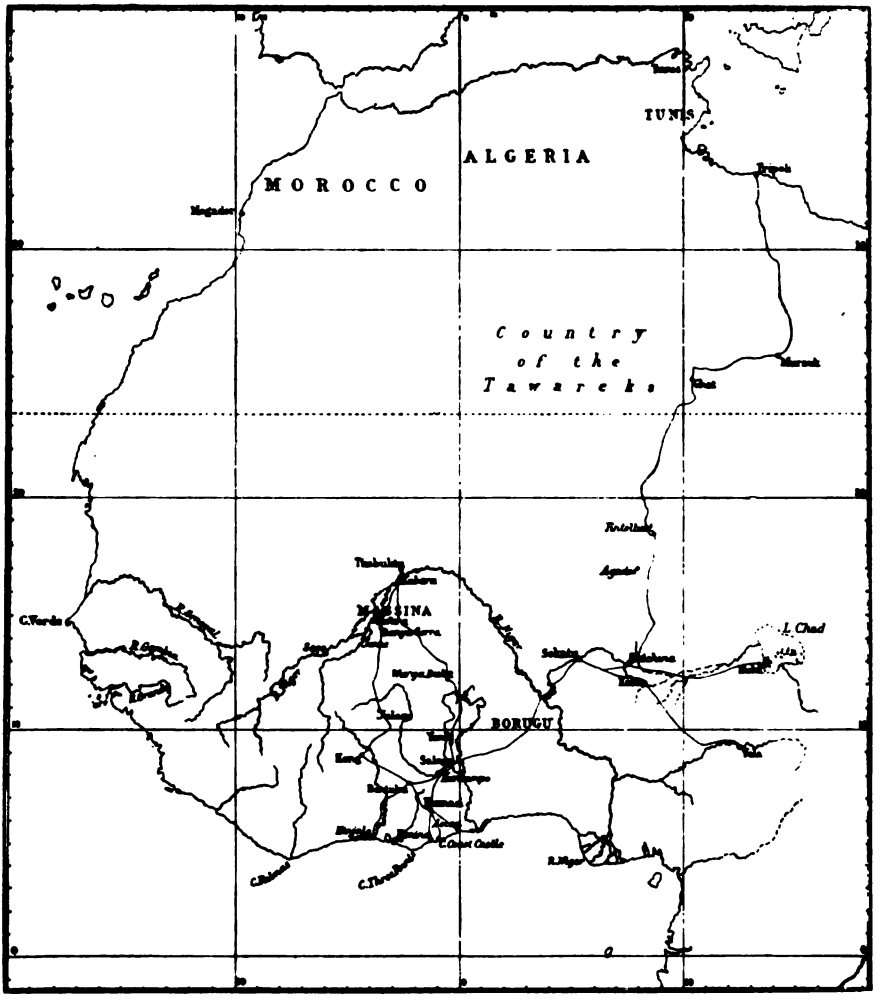
Mahommedan population. They therefore formed at Kantámpo, a few days' journey to the north-east of Kumasi, a market for the interior traffic, and at this place the two caravan roads met.

Here a large number of Ashantis settled and established a kind of depot for the sale of the kola. Here a large market sprang up to which the caravans of the Mahommedans from the north and east brought their merchandise, their gold, slaves and cowries; and the Ashantis and Akems their kola.

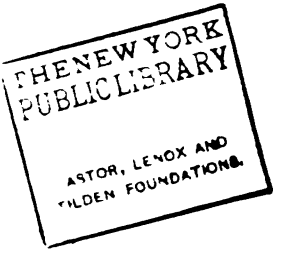
Many native merchants, too, from Cape Coast and the adjacent towns of the littoral, visited Kantámpo, where they exchanged European goods for the merchandise from the interior, and in some cases the merchants from the far interior would travel down through Ashanti to the British settlements.

The benefits that these international markets conferred were numerous and great. To the European import trade they contributed very largely, for the caravans, besides being themselves consumers of European goods which they carried back with them to their own countries, greatly enriched Ashanti and the other local countries, and thus enabled them to become purchasers of the imports of the white men.

The presence of these markets and their importance to the welfare of Ashanti contributed largely to the maintenance of peace in the district: for a war which rendered the caravan roads unsafe, closed the markets in connection



MAP SHEWING THE CARAVAN ROUTES CONNECTING ASHANTI WITH THE GREAT CENTRES OF COMMERCE.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with it, and the flow of wealth into the treasuries of Ashanti was for the time stopped.

The influence of these great market towns must have tended to gradually raise the level of civilization in their neighbourhood; indeed I may say that they actually did produce this effect, as a glance at the conditions that obtained in them will show.

There are in the immediate vicinity of Ashanti three great market towns: Sálaga on the eastern or Hausa caravan road, Bontúku on the northern of Timbúktu road and Kántampo at the meeting of the two. Now these three towns present in common one very curious feature; they are inhabited by people quite alien to the district and present a level of civilization quite different from and far higher than that of the locality in which they are situated.

To take the case of Bontúku, which I have described at some length in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Bontúku, it will be remembered, is the capital of the Kingdom of Jáman, which, lying to the north-west of Ashanti, was formerly tributary to that country. Now Jáman is a country which has not reached a very high grade of civilization: its towns are more or less irregular agglomerations of circular or rectangular huts with roofs of grass or palm thatch, and are inhabited by people who, according to West African standards, are somewhat barbarous and undeveloped, and whose most conspicuous virtue is a remarkable degree of economy in the matter of clothing. Bontúku, on the other hand, is a comparatively well built and civilized town having three

mosques, a large market and some quite extensive indigo works. Its houses are constructed on a civilized model, its streets are fairly regular, and its inhabitants are a civilized people, mostly well dressed, intelligent, and in many cases able to read and write Arabic. Its commerce is extensive, and its markets are conducted in a systematic and orderly manner, and the arrangements for the administration of justice appear to be adequate and satisfactory.

The beneficial influence exerted by a centre of commerce like Bontúku is felt in two ways. In the first place, apart from the immediately pacific influence to which I have already alluded, the presence and example of a large number of persons of a relatively high grade of culture engaged in peaceful arts and industrious pursuits, cannot be without its moral effect on the aboriginal natives: and in the second place, since these markets are formed and increased by the settlement of immigrants from the more civilized countries of the interior, the population acquires an ever increasing proportion of peaceable and industrious members who presently tend to overflow into adjacent towns and raise the level of civilization in them, as has happened at Kratchi or Krake near Sálaga and as is happening at Soku near Bontúku.

Now it must not be forgotten that these centres of civilization and commerce, so beneficial to European trade and so important to the welfare of the natives, were brought into existence by Ashanti: that these great international marts were created and almost entirely maintained by the

HAUSA MERCHANTS IN AN ASHANTI TOWN.

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caravan traffic from the far East and North, and that the goal of these caravans was Ashanti. With the disintegration of the Ashanti kingdom that took place after the war, by which it happened that Ashanti proper became surrounded by the hostile territories of revolted vassals, a great part of the caravan trade ceased, the more local part of it being diverted to Kinjabo (Assini) in the adjacent French Protectorate, while part was probably transferred to the kola-producing districts of Senegal. Whatever caravan-trade had survived these changes in the condition of the country was almost certainly extinguished when Ashanti became British territory: the reason for which will presently appear.

But besides creating an extensive and important commerce by which the English merchants on the coast were inevitably benefited, Ashanti served as the link that connected the interior with the sea-board.

The Great North Road—which after the war of 1873 rapidly degenerated into an almost invisible bush-track—formerly connected Cape Coast, by way of Kumasi, with Kantámpo, Bontúku and Kong, and was the shortest road from the markets of the interior to the sea. But whereas in the palmy days of Ashanti this was an open and safe road, the disorganized mass of mutually-hostile tribes into which that kingdom was subsequently broken up, presented an almost impassable barrier, and, as a result, the stream of trade that formerly flowed into Cape Coast through Kantámpo and Ashanti was diverted, as I have said, to the

French Protectorate, passing to the north of Ashanti and striking the coast at Assini.

The hindrance to commerce occasioned by this unsafe condition of the main trade-roads will probably be permanently removed now that the country has come under British rule, but we shall presently see that the establishment of a British Protectorate raises an obstacle of an entirely different character.

One or two recent travellers who have visited Kumasi since its annexation, have, on being interviewed by representatives of the Press on their return, stated with apparent surprise, that, up to the present, no stores have been established and there does not appear to be any trade in that town. They have, however, spoken with the utmost confidence of the brilliant commercial future which awaits Ashanti and its capital. A similar sanguine tone was noticeable in the newspapers at the time when the annexation was contemplated, and when this was actually achieved pæans of joy arose from the press at the anticipated benefits of this action of the Government. Brightly coloured pictures were drawn of the open roads to the interior (that land of promise of commercial visionaries) to be shortly crowded with industrious natives bringing to the coast their stores of wealth, and the general impression was given that a stupendous obstacle, that had hitherto stood between the white man and some African El Dorado, had been once for all removed.

These ideas are pervaded by a gigantic delusion.

The interior—that is, the country that lies behind Ashanti —has no wealth to offer. There are no great cities peopled by civilized men calling aloud—and able to pay—for the products of European industry. The wide plains of Jáman and Gwanjiowa, but sparsely covered with tiny hamlets and widely separated small towns, have for the most part a population that amply supplies its own wants by the cultivation of a few plots of yams, beans, maize, cotton, and tobacco: whose conception of luxury is realized by sitting on the ground in the shade of their huts and chewing a stick, and whose ideas of magnificence find sufficient expression in the simple ceremonial of the village dances. Even in so important a town as Bontúku[1] I was compelled to give away the goods that I had brought for barter, because nobody would give me even a handful of cowries for them. My native servant and several of our carriers who had brought with them small consignments of Manchester cottons had a similar experience: they sold a few cloths at less than cost price and took the remainder back to the coast. In summing up the character of the Jámans and other interior tribes, my servant remarked with disgust that they "got a dry eye," by which he meant that they were willing to receive gifts, but would not give anything in return.

The only considerable wealth that the country ever possessed was brought into it by the caravans from the far

[1] Bontúku is now in the French sphere.

East and North, which visited Ashanti for the sake of the kola, a forest product that could not be grown in their own country. But a large portion of the caravan traffic ceased after the conquest of Ashanti by the English in 1873, and that which remains will find a formidable obstacle in the abolition of slave-holding rights which will take place as the country comes more under the influence of the English Government.

There can be no doubt that as the interior countries come more within the jurisdiction of the Colonial Courts, slavery, even domestic slavery, will be (nominally) abolished in them just as it has been (nominally)[1] abolished in other parts of the British territories and Protectorate, with the result that the chiefs will find greatly increased difficulty in getting any work performed that requires organized or continuous labour. Hired labour in the interior is quite unobtainable, for the simple reason that the native does not want money. He does not wish to buy anything. He can build his own house, obtain all the food that he wants with scarcely any labour, and the rag of cloth that forms his sole clothing he can either weave himself from the wild cotton or obtain in exchange for a few yams. And all his wants being thus supplied he can by no means be induced to work.

[1] I say nominally, because it has been found impossible in practice to do away with an institution so necessary to the African peoples in the present state of civilization, and so much valued by them, and by the slaves themselves, who obtain a guarantee of maintenance in return for a very moderate amount of labour. (See also p. 364.)

He will not work for the sake of obtaining luxuries, for by so doing he would sacrifice the greatest luxury that he knows—that of doing nothing.

This attitude of mind is barely comprehensible to the energetic Northern European who finds his rest in change of occupation and to whom absolute idleness would be intolerable; who has been accustomed to the struggle for existence that marks the European social life, in which daily labour is the normal and universal condition. But it is nevertheless the characteristic mental attitude of the aboriginal African, and if the power of the chiefs to enforce a certain amount of labour be taken away, the local industries must cease. On the abolition of domestic slavery the kola industry in Ashanti will tend to die out, just as the rubber trade in Akem languished as soon as the abolition of slavery was proclaimed there.

Thus in one way the British annexation of Ashanti (with its accompanying abolition of slave-holding rights) will tend to destroy the caravan traffic by crippling the industry that created it. But it will tend in another way to produce the same result. The caravans from the far interior are composed almost entirely of slaves. A few horses and asses accompany them, but the bulk of the produce and merchandize is borne on the heads of carriers who are the slaves of the merchants by whom the caravans are conducted. Now it is obvious that if slavery were abolished by law throughout Ashanti these merchants would lose all legal claim to their carriers as soon as the caravan crossed the

frontier; and although the desertions would probably be few (for the African slave is by no means so anxious to be liberated as English people have been wont to suppose since the hysterical days of "Uncle Tom"), yet the possibility of so serious a loss, with the attendant disadvantage of returning short-handed, would be quite sufficient to deter merchants from entering British territory.[1] Thus the principal source of wealth seems likely to be driven out of the country as the English enter.

Nor, as will be seen on referring to Chapter XVIII, are the natural productions such as to compensate for the extinction of the indigenous commerce. Without doubt there exists, as I pointed out six years ago, an opening for the establishment of various industries connected with gold, timber, rubber and other native products; but the nature of the climate and the scarcity of labour would tend to seriously hinder such enterprises which, even when successful, would be much less profitable than trade with the natives.

Thus a review of our relations with Ashanti from their commencement to the present time evokes only the unsatisfactory comment, "It might have been."

Specially fortunate among European settlers in West Africa in having in the immediate interior of our possessions a nation not only sufficiently civilized to act as a

[1] Especially if, as I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the claims of slave owners should receive more consideration from our French and German neighbours.

link between us and the tribes of the far interior, but of a commercial importance so great as to attract native traders from nearly half the continent, we have apparently almost from the first made it one of our principal objects to destroy the power upon the integrity of which our commercial success so largely depended. Peculiarly favoured in finding in the rear of our settlements a powerful nation ready and even anxious to enter into a friendly and mutually profitable alliance with us, we have consistently followed a policy as fatal to our own interests as it has been injurious to the subjects of our hostility. There can be little doubt that but for the perverse and unintelligent policy of such men as Governor Smith and Sir Charles McCarthy (by whose activity European trade was, at one time, nearly extinguished), the Ashanti Kingdom, with its great commercial organization, would have extended, quite early in this century, to the sea coast and realized its great ambition, that of trading directly with the white man. By this means Cape Coast, Accra and other centres of European trade would have become termini of Ashanti trade roads and would thus have been brought into direct relation with the caravan traffic of the far interior.

CHAPTER XVII

A CHAPTER ON MALARIA

Our knowledge of Malaria quite recent—Climatic Conditions producing it—West African Malarial Diseases—Intermittent and Remittent Fevers—Malarial Evolution of a European—Symptoms of Fever—Common Remittent—Ague—Pernicious forms—Black-water Fever—Its symptoms—Its Seasons—Nature of Malaria—Laveran's Discovery—Confirmations—The Micro-organism of Malaria—Its Life-history—Stages of growth—The Spore—The Growing Form—The Adult—Relation of the Parasite to the Disease—Latency of the Parasite—Diffusion of the Organism—General Habits of Intra-corporeal Parasites—The Tape Worms—The Flukes—The Guinea Worm—Filaria Sanguinis Hominis—Flagellate Forms of the Parasite—Part played by the Mosquito—Mode of Diffusion of Spores—Conditions favourable to the Existence of the Parasite—Malaria probably increasing—Becoming more malignant—Treatment inefficient—Varying susceptibility of individuals.

THE subject of malaria may be regarded as a portion of the natural history of West Africa, and it is one so closely associated with West African affairs that no work dealing with that region, and especially emanating from a medical practitioner, could be considered complete without some reference to it.

Popular ideas concerning malaria are of the most hazy kind, and indeed those of the medical profession are but

now integrating into something like definite shape. Until quite recently malaria was known, like electricity, only by the phenomena which attended its presence: its effects on the animal body made known its existence, and certain uniform conditions under which it appeared gave some clue to its causation. Of late, however, the researches of several investigators have enabled us to fill up many of the blanks in our knowledge, and to these recent discoveries I shall again allude when I come to speak of the essential nature of malaria: passing on now to the morbid conditions of the human body to which it gives rise.

Malarial diseases may be roughly defined as diseases usually of a febrile type, apparently not infectious or capable of being transferred from one animal body to another, but appearing to be produced by some condition peculiar to certain localities. They are distinguished from other diseases by a peculiarly strong tendency to periodicity or cyclical recurrence of certain symptoms.

The exact climatic conditions under which malaria tends to be generated have not been satisfactorily determined; but it is generally supposed that the presence of stagnant water acts as an important factor, while a high temperature undoubtedly furnishes a favourable condition. It is commonly believed that an efficient subsoil drainage tends to diminish the prevalence of malaria or even entirely extinguish it, and there seems little doubt that it tends to disappear from the vicinity of large towns and from land which is in a state of active cultivation.

It is also said that malaria is much more prevalent at low than at high altitudes, and this is no doubt true where the differences are great; but I was never able to perceive any difference in this respect between the high and low lands of the Gold Coast.

My experience leads me to believe that lands in which extensive swamps and lagoons occur—as in the eastern districts of the Gold Coast—are especially malarious; while the dense forest, contrary to a common belief, is comparatively free from malaria: in confirmation of which latter opinion I may mention that Axim, the only forest station on the Coast, is notoriously the healthiest in the Colony.

The malarial diseases of West Africa are somewhat different from those of India, but like them may be divided into two groups:

1. Remittent fevers, in which the body temperature remains higher than the normal throughout the whole course of the attack, but approaches the normal by periodical *remissions*.

2. Intermittent fevers, or agues, in which at certain regular intervals the fever entirely subsides and the symptoms disappear, forming an *intermission*; after which the disease returns and repeats the preceding cycle of phenomena. The length of the interval or intermission is generally constant during any given attack, and agues are thus classified into "quotidian" in which the attack returns every day, "tertian" in which it recurs every alternate day, "quartan" in which there is a clear interval of two days and so on.

In addition to the ordinary forms of "fever", there occur on the Gold Coast certain "pernicious" or malignant forms, the most common being the variety known locally as Black-water fever, and an extremely malignant and rapidly fatal form attended with excessively high temperature or hyperpyrexia.

The European resident usually undergoes a regular malarial evolution, as was, I think, first pointed out by Eyles. [1]

When he first arrives he is attacked by a somewhat acute irregular remittent, lasting from four to eight days. These attacks return at intervals, becoming gradually less acute and lasting a shorter time, but generally recurring at more frequent intervals. If he remains long enough on the Coast the remittent presently gives place to the intermittent form and he is said to be acclimatized: but this is a very delusive expression, for although the attacks of fever tend to be less acute, each one leaves him more debilitated and cachetic and more and more prone to the deadly Black-water fever, which seldom or never attacks a new-comer, but lies in wait for the broken-down "Coaster" on whom it fastens with fearful malignancy.

If the European returns to Europe, as most of the officials do after twelve months' service, the malaria becomes to some extent eliminated from his system, and when he again arrives on the Coast, if his health has been fairly

[1] Malarial Fever as met with on the Gold Coast. C. H. Eyles, 1887.

restored, he recommences his evolutionary cycle and is again attacked by the acute remittent: but it is to be noticed that as the total length of his service increases so does his predisposition to Black-water fever increase up to the third year, and if he escapes then, as comparatively few do, he is probably exceptionally resistent and may pass several years without a visitation from this appalling disease.

I shall now briefly describe each form of malarial fever met with on the Gold Coast, and I may remark that, apart from professional practice, I have in my own person had experience of every form excepting the hyperpyrexial.

When a new-comer is first attacked by fever his attention is first drawn to his condition by a peculiar sensation of harshness, dryness and tenderness of the skin which seems to rub against his clothing in a singularly grating unpleasant manner. Very soon his head commences to ache, he becomes alternately hot and chilly with occasional slight shivers. Then muscular pains make their appearance, and a general bruised stiff feeling develops in the back and limbs. These symptoms rapidly become more marked, and the headache increases to an intensity that is almost stupefying. Then the doctor is sent for, and the thermometer shows a temperature of 102° or 103°. To the other symptoms are now added a total loss of appetite, a tendency to vomit, often very distressing and especially so in those of intemperate habits, pain in the regions of the liver and spleen with evident signs of congestion of those organs.

There is extreme intolerance of light and noise, great depression of spirits and very frequently delirium. In this condition the patient remains for two or three days when in fairly mild cases the fever begins to gradually subside, convalescence being established at the end of from five to nine days. The patient now begins to get about again, but remains feeble and anæmic for some time, and very often is troubled by successive crops of boils.

The succeeding attacks are generally similar in character, but less acute and of shorter duration, although there is no invariable rule, for a severe remittent may occur at any period of residence; but in the great majority of cases the sequence of events is as I have stated. These sub-acute remittents of what we may call the middle period of residence are much less disagreeable than the acute remittent that assails the new-comer: the temperature remains at a lower level, the head-ache is much less severe, the muscular pains less intense and the skin acts freely throughout the greater part of the attack, and often for a day or two after convalescence is established.

The intermittent fever or ague of the Gold Coast which represents the more chronic form of malarial disease, is not markedly different from the ague described by writers on Indian diseases. It is, however, decidedly rare, for the local fevers tend generally to the remittent type. When it does occur it exhibits, like the agues of other countries, a cold stage attended with shivering and a subjective sensation of extreme cold (although the body temperature

is much above the normal), a hot stage in which the temperature frequently reaches 107 degrees and the patient becomes delirious, and a sweating stage in which profuse perspiration occurs coincidently with a rapid fall of the temperature and a general subsidence of the symptoms.

It is not, however, either of these forms of fever that have earned for the West Coast of Africa the well-deserved title of "the white man's grave." Unpleasant as they are, and in the long run destructive of the general health, they very seldom immediately cause death. The office of executioner is filled by two special varieties of the disease, one of which lies in wait for the new-comer, while the other haunts the cachectic and debilitated "Coaster" of a year or two's standing. These are the so-called malignant or pernicious malarial fevers which have been already alluded to, the one form being attended with hyperpyrexia and the other constituting the too well-known "Black-water fever."

The first of these, the hyperpyrexial pernicious fever, was extremely rare when I was on the Coast, but has, I learn, since become alarmingly frequent. It attacks men within a few weeks, or even days, of their arrival, and its course is as rapid as the most acute form of cholera. In a most typical case that I attended, in conjunction with Dr. J. Farrell Easmon, death occurred in about three hours from the onset of the special symptoms, which were a temperature of 109.5°, rising to 110° shortly after death, profound coma ending in violent convulsions, black vomit, and a number of ecchymoses on the limbs. The disease

is very apt to be mistaken by the inexperienced for other affections, especially for heat apoplexy, a disorder which I do not remember meeting with during my residence on the Gold Coast.

The great destroyer, however, in West Africa, and the bug-bear of all "Coasters," is Black-water fever, an intensely malignant fever of a low type which attacks persons whose systems have become saturated with the malarial poison, and who by long residence in malarious districts have become the subjects of the more chronic forms of fever.

Black-water fever is an extremely characteristic disease and could hardly be mistaken by any one who had once seen a case. It almost invariably conforms to the remittent type, but I have seen one case of intermittent Black-water fever the only instance that I know of. Unlike the other pernicious form, it is characterized usually by a very moderate temperature, which indeed, in some cases, remains below normal throughout the entire course of the disease. It is essentially an adynamic disease, and is from the first marked by signs of extreme depression which is accentuated by the shock that the patient experiences on discovering the nature of his illness.

The attack is usually ushered in in an individual already reduced by previous fevers, by a prolonged and severe fit of shivering which may be repeated once or twice during the illness.

The countenance is at first characterized by a ghastly pallor, but very soon the skin begins to be tinged with

yellow which rapidly becomes more intense until, in about twenty-four hours, the patient is the colour of a rather unripe lemon. At the same time there commences that excretion of blood-pigment by the kidneys to which the disease owes its popular name.

In a few days, if the patient survives, the yellow staining of the skin begins to fade, and as it disappears it leaves the peculiar blanched, waxen appearance which is seen in persons who have suffered a severe loss of blood. And this is, in fact, precisely what has happened, for at the commencement of the disease, probably during the initial shivering fit, an immense destruction of the red corpuscles of the blood occurs, and the red colouring matter (*hæmoglobin*) which they contain becomes dissolved in the fluid part of the blood. Here, being a foreign substance, it acts as a poison to the nerve centres through which it circulates, and the kidneys make active efforts to remove it: moreover, it permeates the tissues and stains them, the yellow colour of the skin being thus produced, like the yellow discoloration round a bruise, by altered blood pigment.

If the disease takes an unfavourable turn, which it does in about three-fifths of the cases of "first attacks" and in an increasing proportion of second or third attacks, a second shivering fit probably occurs, or even a succession of them. The skin acquires a darker greenish yellow tinge, and objects appear to the patient as if seen through yellow glass. The vomiting which was incessant during the early

part of the attack now gives place to an equally persistent hiccough, but the patient is still unable, as a rule, to retain either food or medicine. The kidneys gradually cease to act; the pinched, corpse-like expression of countenance noticeable at the beginning of the disease, becomes more marked; the nose becomes thin and sharp, and the eyes sunken. Towards the end, periods of quiet, rambling delirium occur, and in these the mind appears very frequently to revert to the events of early life in a manner that is extremely pathetic. I have more than once seen men, "hard-shell Coasters" of the most pronounced type, during the delirium that preceded death interrupt the stream of incoherent talk by singing softly in a feeble, quavering voice, fragments of old-fashioned Sunday-school hymns or snatches of childish songs. [1]

This stage—which in many cases does not occur at all—soon gives place to drowsiness merging into complete insensibility; the breathing grows slower and is presently interrupted by pauses of increasing length, and finally ceases.

From the fact that one of the principal factors in the production of this formidable disease is the cachexia pro-

[1] "A' made a finer end and went away an it had been my christom child; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields."

(King Henry V, Act. ii, Scene 3.)

That the death of poor Sir John Falstaff, thus so movingly and faithfully described by Dame Quickly, resulted from a chronic form of malarial fever is made evident in Scene 1.

duced by previous attacks of malarial fever, it will be obvious that it has a great tendency to recur; for the profound cachexia that follows recovery from it constitutes a powerful predisposing cause of future attacks: whence it follows that persons recovering from Black-water fever should return to Europe for a change without delay.

Black-water fever has its seasons, like definitely infective diseases. In some years hardly a single case occurs upon the whole of the Gold Coast, while in others, as for instance 1887, it is so widespread as to resemble an epidemic. In that year I reported a mortality of forty per cent among the Europeans at Ketta (Quittah), and I believe the mortality at other stations was even higher.

To the less common forms of malarial diseases that occur on the West Coast of Africa it is unnecessary to refer in detail.

The "typhoid" or algide form (not related to genuine typhoid or enteric fever), the paralytic, the dysenteric and other aberrant manifestations of the malarial poison, are so rare and contribute so little to the mortality of the district as to be of no interest to the public at large.

Nature of Malaria. From the circumstance that malarial disease occurs in certain well-marked areas of the earth's surface: that a healthy person taking up residence in such a malarial district tends to develop the disease, while a person suffering from malarial disease tends to recover on removing from such districts; it had become evident long before the germ theory of disease in general had been

conceived, that the ultimate cause of malarial maladies lay outside the body, and it seemed more than probable that such diseases were immediately produced by the entrance into the body of some disease-producing germs. It is hardly necessary to say that when the intimate relation between bacteria and infective disease became established, a considerable number of malarial germs were from time to time discovered, only to be subsequently exploded. The latest and best known of these was the *Bacillus malariæ* of Klebs and Tommasi-Crudeli.

Early in the eighties a discovery of a somewhat unexpected kind was made by M. Laveran, who found in the blood of persons suffering from malarial disease, a parasite which was not a bacterium or any other kind of microscopic fungus, but a member of the animal kingdom, a minute protozoon. This discovery soon received confirmation from several investigators, among whom Marchiafava and Celli may be mentioned, and our knowledge on the subject has recently been considerably extended by the researches of Dr. Manson, to whose Goulstonian Lectures and other writings I am indebted for the more recent facts set forth in this chapter.

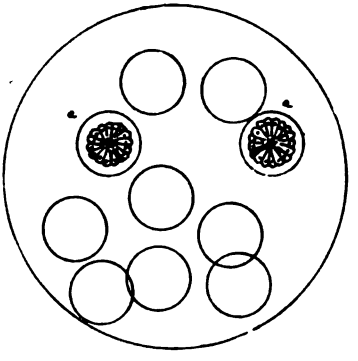
It appears now to be clearly established that all malarial disease results from the presence in the blood of immense numbers of minute organisms which are parasitical upon the red blood corpuscles, upon which they feed and which they ultimately destroy. These organisms, which have received the name of plasmodia, are among the most

rudimentary of animal forms and appear to resemble, in many respects, the gregarines and coccidia, two groups of protozoa to which they are indeed nearly related. The size of the plasmodium will be gathered from the fact that when adult it occupies the whole of the interior of a red blood corpuscle.

We may now briefly consider the life history of the plasmodium and the part that it plays in the production of malarial disease; and for this purpose it will be well to select a simple and regular form of fever of brief duration and with a frequently recurring cycle of symptoms, such as tertian ague. In this variety of fever the cycle of phenomena is as follows:—1st a rapid rise of body-temperature accompanied by head-ache, shivering and a subjective sensation of cold. (Cold stage.) 2nd., the high temperature maintained and accompanied by head-ache, dry skin and a subjective sensation of heat. (Hot stage.) 3rd., rapid subsidence of the temperature to the normal, accompanied by profuse perspiration and a general disappearance of abnormal subjective sensations. The whole series of events occupies only a few hours, and on its completion by the occurrence of the sweating stage, the patient is apparently restored to health and remains quite well until the expiration of forty-eight hours from the commencement of the cold stage, when his temperature again begins to rise, shivering sets in and the cycle of phenomena is repeated.

If, in a case of this kind, a drop of the patient's blood is examined under the microscope, just as the temperature

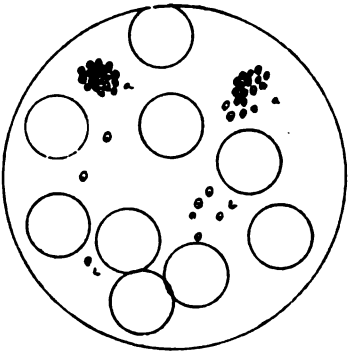
is beginning to rise, there will be seen, scattered among the blood corpuscles, a number of minute mulberry-like bodies each of which is embedded in a red blood corpuscle. These little bodies are composed of a number of minute globules



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 1.

A drop of blood from a case of tertian ague at the commencement of the cold stage.

a. a. Red corpuscles containing "rosette" or mulberry-shaped sporulating form of the parasite.



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 2.

A drop of blood from a case of tertian ague during cold stage.

a. a. The preceding form of the parasite breaking up into its constituent spores.

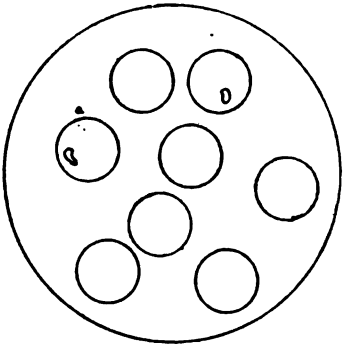
b. Free spores floating in the blood plasma.

aggregated around a mass of dark pigment. If the blood be examined at a little later stage of the disease [1] similar bodies will be seen, but no longer enclosed in blood corpuscles; and in some of these the little globules, of which the mulberry mass is composed, will appear to be falling apart. On examining a drop of blood at a still

[1] For the sake of clearness to the non-medical reader I assume that all the plasmodia in the blood change simultaneously. This, of course, is not the case, and in a single droplet of blood specimens will be found in several different stages of development.

later stage, the little globules will be observed quite free, floating about in the blood plasma, and some of them will be seen to have attached themselves to, or effected entrance into, certain of the blood corpuscles.

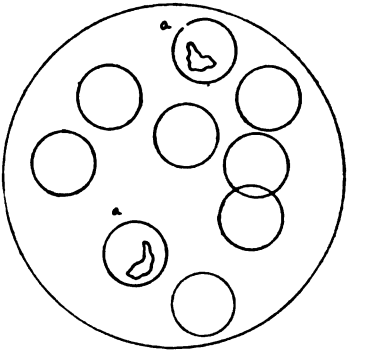
If another examination is made after the lapse of a few hours, the blood is found to contain no mulberry-like bodies,



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 3.

Drop of blood from a case of tertian ague during cold or shivering stage.

a. a. Blood corpuscles to which the young parasites have affixed themselves.



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 4.

Drop of blood from a case of tertian ague during hot stage.

a. a. Parasites growing in the substances of the red corpuscles and throwing out arms or "pseudopodia."

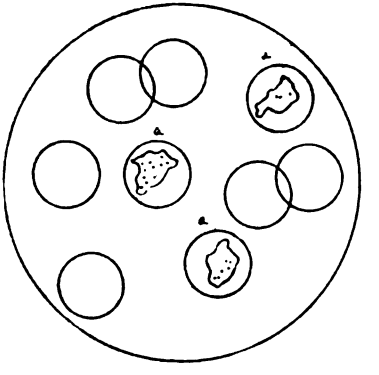
nor free globules, nor any of the small bodies affixed to, or enclosed in, the blood corpuscles, but many of the corpuscles may be seen to contain relatively large bodies of irregular form (*amœboid bodies*) which exhibit quite active movements, continually altering their shape and throwing out elongated finger-like projections from their substance (*pseudopodia*).

A still later examination shows these same bodies now further increased in size and distinguished by a number of

particles of black pigment which are seen to move about inside the organism.

An examination made a few hours before the occurrence of the next cold stage shows a further change. The bodies are now so much increased in size that they almost or entirely fill the corpuscle. They are, however, no longer in motion, and the particles of pigment, although larger and more numerous, have almost ceased to move.

In some cases the pigment granules may be seen to collect in lines radiating from the centre, or in a central mass.



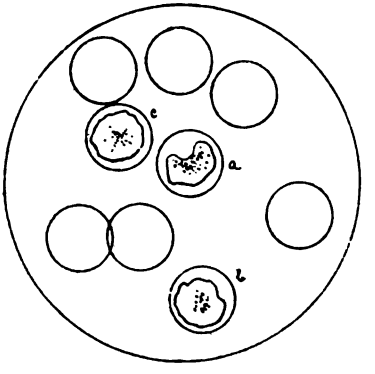
TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 5.
Drop of blood from the same case at a later stage.
a. a. a. Parasites nearly full grown, containing granules of blood pigment.

If, finally, we examine the blood immediately before the occurrence of the shivering stage, we shall find only the mulberry-like bodies at first described, and with these the cycle recommences.

Thus it will be seen that the various stages of the disease correspond to certain stages in the life of the parasite. Before the paroxysm commences the blood contains numbers of the mulberry-like bodies, which are in reality the sporulating form of the plasmodium—*i. e.*, the form in which the adult body has become divided into a number of spores.

With the disintegration of these into their constituent spores and the invasion by these free spores of the blood corpuscles, the active phase of the disease commences.

During the period in which the corpuscles are being devoured by the plasmodia which have entered them, the disease continues; while with the attainment by the parasites of the adult form (by which time the corpuscles attacked by them have been completely destroyed) the active stage of the disease passes away.



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 6.

A drop of blood from a case of tertian ague near the end of an intermission, *i.e.*, shortly before the occurrence of the cold stage.

a. Adult parasite in a blood corpuscle.

b. The same advancing towards the sporulating stage.

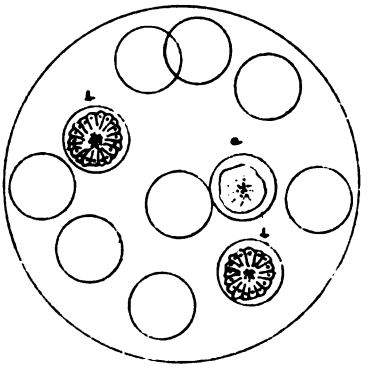
c. The same showing radiating arrangement of pigment granules and commencing separation into spores.

The intermission, or interval of apparently restored health now supervenes, and during this period the adult plasmodia pass on to the sporulating form, and when these have attained maturity and are ready to disseminate their spores the cycle of phenomena recommences.

Every well-marked variety of malarial fever appears to be produced by a distinct species of plasmodium. Thus the parasite which gives rise to tertian ague is quite different from that which produces quartan ague. These dif-

ferent forms need not be described here in detail, but it is necessary before quitting the subject to mention the formidable "crescent parasite."

This form of the plasmodium is generally believed to be the cause of those *accès pernicieux*, or sudden outbursts of malignancy, by which the patient is carried off in a few hours, an example of which has been given on page 498. Black-water fever also is undoubtedly caused by a distinct species of parasite, perhaps allied to the crescent, but I believe this has not yet been isolated.



TERTIAN AGUE. STAGE 7.

Drop of blood from the same case at the end of the intermission —immediately before the commencement of the cold or shivering stage.

a. Corpuscle containing adult parasite commencing to break up into spores.

b. The same showing the change completed in the "rosette" form with which the cycle commenced.

A question which naturally arises is, "What becomes of the parasite when the disease has run its course?" If a drop of blood from the finger of a person who has suffered from malaria, but has apparently completely recovered, be examined, no parasites can be discovered. The obvious inference appears to be that they have become extinct, just as the micro-organisms of measles or scarlatina become extinct, once for all, when the course of the disease is completed. But

this inference is at once set aside by the well-known fact that persons who have lived in a malarious district are liable for years afterwards to attacks of malarial fever, during which the plasmodium reappears in the finger blood. I remember a missionary who, having suffered from Black-water fever at Ketta, in West Africa, had a second attack at Stuttgart. I also remember an officer who passed his first year of service on the Gold Coast without a single manifestation of malarial disease, but who, on returning to England on leave, suffered from well-marked African remittent.

A consideration of these facts forces us to the conclusion that, in the words of Manson, [1] "in one form or another the plasmodium must have been lying dormant in some out of the way corner of the body" during the interval of apparently restored health.

It would, as the same writer remarks, "be interesting to know what are the physical conditions that rouse it from its sleep and permit it again to run riot in the blood—conditions on the withdrawal of which it once more assumes its latent form. This is a subject about which we as yet know absolutely nothing. It is an important one, for it is probable that if we knew the conditions which arouse it into activity, we might be able, by reproducing the one or avoiding the other, to obtain a therapeutical and prophylactic mastery over this germ, of the utmost value to humanity." [2]

We now come to a portion of the subject which is of

[1] Goulstonian Lectures, 1896.

[2] Ibid.

the utmost interest and importance, namely, that which relates to the life-history of the parasite outside the human body and the circumstances under which it effects an entrance. This matter has been carefully investigated by Manson and Ross, and the former has, in the lectures above referred to, advanced a theory as to the manner in which the parasite becomes disseminated, and adduced a number of facts in support of his view.

Before, however, proceeding to a consideration of Manson's theory respecting the plasmodium, I think it desirable for the information of the general reader, to say a few words respecting the habits of intra-corporeal parasites in general.

Very few, if any, internal parasites pass through the entire cycle of existence in a single body or "host" (by a "cycle of existence" I mean the series of changes from emergence from the egg or spore to adult life and the production of an egg or spore). The reason is obvious. If such parasites passed an entire life in a single "host," they would multiply in that host to such an extent as to ultimately cause its destruction, and with its destruction, their own. Moreover, a whole race would thus be affected by the vicissitudes of a single "host," a condition eminently unfavourable to the species. We therefore find that most internal parasites undergo certain metamorphoses, and in each well-marked stage of their existence they inhabit a different "host."

Thus, for instance, the tape-worms that inhabit the human

intestine cannot reproduce themselves therein: their eggs pass outside the human body and cannot be hatched until they have passed into the body of a particular species of animal known as the "intermediary host," as *e.g.*, the pig. On reaching the stomach of the pig, however, the eggs become hatched and give exit to a sexually immature form of worm called *Cysticercus*.

The cysticerci burrow at once through the walls of the stomach or intestines and migrate to the muscles, where they take up residence and, becoming "encysted" or surrounded by a small sac, they remain inactive, unable to further develop in the body of the pig. If, however, the pig is killed and the parasite-infested flesh (known as "measled" pork) eaten, the cysticercus is liberated in the human stomach and rapidly develops to a state of sexual maturity, constituting the adult tape-worm: and the remainder of its life is passed in the intestine of its "host." In this case it will be seen that there is a certain reciprocity between the two "hosts"; man eats the flesh of the pig, containing the larval parasite, while the pig devours such garbage as may contain its eggs. Some such relation between the two or more "hosts" is necessary and is always found to exist. Besides the tape-worm which he obtains from the pig (*Tænia solium*) man derives tape-worms from other animals whose flesh he habitually eats, as *e.g.*, *Tænia mediocanellata* from the ox and *Tænia tenella* from the sheep. A tape-worm is also supplied to the carnivorous cat by the garbage-eating mouse. The relation is

generally less direct than in the case of the tape-worm. The liver-fluke of the sheep spends a part of its larval existence in the body of the pond snail (*Limnæa*): the snails are accidentally swallowed by the sheep while browsing by or drinking from the ponds, and the larvæ (*Cercariæ*) are thus liberated in the stomach of the sheep, and having migrated to the liver, attain sexual maturity. The eggs pass into the sheep's intestine and thus find their way back into the ponds.

The Guinea-worm, which is so troublesome in the tropics, inhabits, while in the larval state, a minute water-flea (*Cyclops*). This little crustacean being swallowed with drinking water, the larvæ are liberated in the stomach. They at once develop into the adult form, and the female, a long catgut-like worm, burrows through the tissues until it reaches the surface of the body. Having perforated the skin it extrudes the eggs through the opening, and when the person in whose body it has lodged bathes in a pond or tank, the eggs are floated off into the water, where they hatch, and the liberated larvæ invade the bodies of the waterfleas. Another example, and one which being more germane to our present subject, we may consider in more detail, is the curious parasite known as *Filaria sanguinis hominis.*

This is a minute Nematode worm which is found in immense numbers in the blood of certain persons in tropical countries. Its habits have been minutely investigated and present many points of great interest, of which the one that

is of most importance in relation to our present subject is its mode of diffusion.

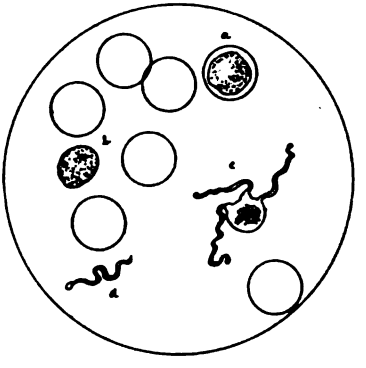
It has been shown by Manson that this filaria is parasitic on the mosquito as well as on man, and that the female insect (which alone is a blood-sucker) receives the filariæ into her stomach with the ingested blood. The filaria then migrates from the stomach of the mosquito to the muscles of its thorax and there undergoes a metamorphosis that inaugurates a new phase of its life history. About a week after the mosquito has gorged herself with blood she proceeds to deposit her eggs in stagnant water: she then dies, and her body falling into the water, the filariæ escape into it. A certain proportion of them will obtain entrance into the bodies of persons drinking the water and thus the cycle is completed.

We may now proceed to the consideration of Manson's theory as to the diffusion of the plasmodium.

If a drop of blood containing plasmodia at the stage of development which immediately precedes the evolution of the "rosette" or "morula," be watched for from a quarter to half an hour, some remarkable changes will be observed. First the large adult plasmodium will be seen to escape from its enclosing blood corpuscle, then the pigment in its interior will be seen to be violently agitated, while the entire plasmodium undergoes violent contortions. Suddenly long flexible arms (*flagella*) are projected from its substance and lash about like the tentacles of an octopus, and if the parasite is closely watched, one or more of the flagella

may be seen to detach themselves and swim away in the blood plasma.

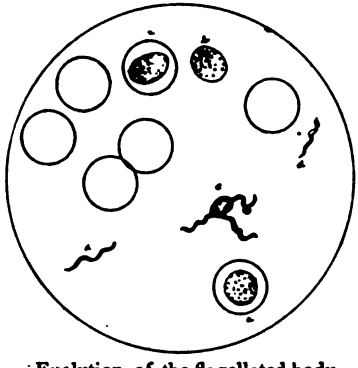
So far we have dealt with facts universally recognised. The interpretations of these facts by different authorities vary widely. By most continental observers the changes in the plasmodium leading to the formation of flagella, are regarded as degenerative; the flagellate organism is, according to them, a dying organism. By Manson, on the other hand, the flagellate body is regarded as the extra-corporeal sporulating form, homologous with the intra-corporeal mulberrylike sporulating form, while the free swimming flagella he regards as extra-corporeal spores. It is to be noticed that the flagellate form of plasmodium never exists in the blood while it is in the body, but appears only in blood which has been some time outside the body. It is also necessary to point out that the form of plasmodium which becomes flagellate is the adult form, which, had it remained in the blood-vessels, would have very soon developed into the mulberry-shaped sporulating form.



Evolution of the flagellated body in the parasite of tertian ague.
a. Intra-corpuscular form.
b. The parasite after its escape from its corpuscle.
c. Flagellated body.
d. Free flagellum.

Manson conjectures that the agent in diffusing the malarial

plasmodium is the same as that in the diffusion of the filaria—the mosquito.[1] He believes that the plasmodia, being drawn with the blood into the insect's stomach, there undergo the changes that I have described, become flagellate and cast off free flagella which migrate from the stomach into the tissues of the mosquito. It is interesting to observe that since Manson first propounded this theory it has received considerable confirmation from the observations of Surgeon-Major Ronald Ross, who had investigated the subject at some length. This observer has actually seen the flagellated organisms in blood removed from the stomach of mosquitos (which he had reared from the eggs for the purpose of the investigation), and has shown that they, so far from being killed and digested as would probably have happened had they



Evolution of the flagellated body in the parasite of quartan ague.

a. a. Intra-corpuscular form, adult parasite contained in a red corpuscle.

b. The same after escaping from the corpuscle.

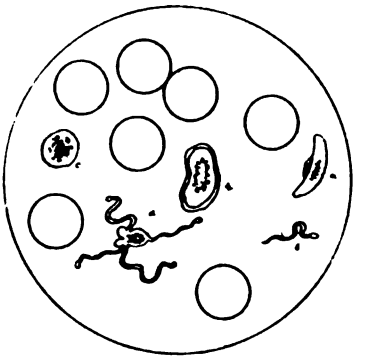
c. Flagellated form.

d. Free Flagellum.

[1] In this connection I venture to quote the following striking passage from Mr. Baring-Gould's picturesque story, "Mehalah":— "In the plaster and oak cottages away from the sea, by stagnant pools, the hatching-places of clouds of mos-quitos, whence rises with the night the haunting spirit of tertian ague..... live the old East Saxon..... day labourers." p. 27.

been merely degeneration forms, remained lively and developed with great energy.

The remaining stages of the process appear to be similar to those in the case of filaria (and may best be described in Manson's own words). "The female mosquito, after she has filled herself with blood—the male insect is not a blood-sucker—seeks out some dark and sheltered spot near stagnant water. At the end of about six days she quits her shelter, and, alighting on the surface of the water, deposits her eggs thereon. She then dies, and, as a rule, falls into the water alongside her eggs. The eggs float about for a time, and then, in due course, each gives birth to a tiny swimming larva. These larvæ, in virtue of a voracious appetite, grow apace, casting their skins several times to admit of growth.



Evolution of the flagellated body in the crescent parasite (the parasite of one of the pernicious forms of fever).

a. Crescent (adult parasite contained in a corpuscle, the shape of which it has modified).

b. The same about to sporulate.

c. The same after emerged from the corpuscle.

d. Flagellated form.

e. Free Flagellum.

"Later they pass into the nympha stage, during which, after a time, they float on the surface of the water.

"Finally, the shell of the nympha cracks along its dorsal surface and a young mosquito emerges.

"Standing, as on a raft, on the empty pelt, the young mosquito floats on the surface of the water while its wings are drying and acquiring rigidity. When this is complete it flies away.

"The young mosquito larvæ, to satisfy their prodigious appetites, devour everything eatable they come across; and one of the first things they eat, if they get the chance, is the dead body of their parent, now soft and sodden from decomposition and long immersion. They even devour their own cast off skins. In examining mosquito larvæ one often comes across specimens whose alimentary canals are stuffed with the scales, fragments of limbs, and other remains of the parental insect and larval pelts." [1] In this way the parasite is probably transferred from the mosquito to its offspring.

"We can readily understand," continues Manson, "how the mosquito-bred plasmodium may be swallowed by man in water, as so many disease germs are, and we can readily understand how it may be inhaled in dust. Mosquito-haunted pools dry up. The plasmodia in the larvæ and those that have been scattered about in the water, finding themselves stranded by the drought and so placed in a condition unfavourable for development, pass into a resting stage, just as they do when by quinine or other means man is rendered temporaily unsuited for their active life. They may, probably do, become encysted as so many of

[1] Goulstonian Lectures.

the protozoa do in similar circumstances. The dried sediment of the pool, blown about by winds and currents of air, is inhaled by man, and so the plasmodium may find its way to the human "host," from whom its ancestors, perhaps, had started generations back..... Many mosquitos die without getting to water: all male mosquitos die without seeking water. They may die far from water, blown away, as we know mosquitos are, by high winds. The bodies of such mosquitos fall in time on the soil and decompose. The parasites they contained pass into the resting stage: and in this form they may be carried into the air by currents, or be shaken out by man when he disturbs the soil.

"In this way, too, the plasmodium may find a route to man.

"In this way, too, we may explain the occurrence of these cases of malaria which apparently, though not really, are unconnected with swamps or stagnant water.

"Such is my view of the life history of the malaria parasite and the *rôle* of the mosquito with regard to it, and of the process by which man becomes infected." [1]

In connection with this very interesting and promising mosquito theory I may mention the belief, very general amongst old "Coasters", that the mosquito curtain is to some extent a protection against malaria, as suggesting the possibility of the mosquito not only abstracting, but also introducing the plasmodium. It may also be of interest

[1] Goulstonian Lectures.

to note that mosquitos do not appear to suck the blood of persons suffering from Black-water fever, and it is generally recognised that old Coasters of perhaps five or six years' standing, are but little troubled with those insects.

Passing on now to more general considerations, we may enquire what are the circumstances and conditions that are favourable to the existence and diffusion of the malarial parasite, *i.e.*, of malarial disease.

That the presence of man is not an essential condition of its existence is at once obvious from the fact that many uninhabited lands are highly malarious: probably man shares the parasite with other animals besides the mosquito. But it is also evident that since man, and especially the white variety of man, furnishes an exceptionally favourable *nidus* for the growth of the parasite (and consequently a convenient centre for its diffusion), it follows that the presence of Europeans forms a condition favourable to the growth and multiplication of the plasmodium in the region we are now considering. Especially is this true of forms of the parasite which find but little opportunity of multiplication in the bodies of the indigenous population, as for instance, the plasmodium of Black-water fever, a disease that is infinitely rare among the natives. [1]

The practical deduction from this is that with the increasing influx of Europeans into Western Tropical Africa

[1] I have never seen a case, but I was assured by intelligent natives that it does occasionally occur.

we may expect an increase in the prevalence of malarial disease and especially of the more virulent forms.

And this rather unsatisfactory inference is quite supported by experience: for although the reputation of the West African climate has been bad enough for years, yet there are many indications that it is growing even more deadly. There is, indeed, a certain species of optimist—usually a Colonial governor or a missionary—who believes that "the sanitary improvements introduced by the government have effected a great amelioration of the climate": but I am not acquainted with the sanitary improvements referred to, nor are there any diseases which appear to be due to defective sanitation, while the remarkable absence of typhoid fever is, I think, largely due to the absence of sanitary tinkering on the part of the authorities. [1]

The general opinion among old Coasters is that the climate is worse than it used to be, and many have assured me that the prevalence of Black-water fever is a comparatively new feature of Coast life.

Again, on reading the older writers on West Africa, one does not gather that the climate was then so bad as at present, and there is in none—to my knowledge—any mention of Black-water fever, a disease of so striking and remarkable a character that it could hardly have escaped

[1] Miss Kingsley remarks that "the malarial typhoid seems confined to districts in which a good deal of European attention has been given to drainage systems."—Travels in West Africa. On the Gold Coast, where there were no drains or sewers of any kind, I never saw a case either of typhoid or typho-malarial fever.

observation, and if observed would almost inevitably have been commented upon. Moreover, Black-water fever was not noticed by any medical writer before 1850, and it has recently made its appearance in British Central Africa where, I believe, it was not previously known.

Since I left the Gold Coast I learn that Black-water fever has increased in frequency and that the apoplectiform variety of the pernicious form of fever, so rare in my time that I saw only a single well-marked case, is now comparatively common. I am also informed that some cases of genuine Yellow Fever have occurred, which I shall take the liberty (until I see convincing medical reports to the contrary) of believing to have been cases of extra-malignant Black-water fever.

The outlook is not therefore, specially encouraging; the disease appears to be increasing in prevalence and the type becoming more malignant, and to this process no limit can be assigned.

Meanwhile, as we shall presently see, there is practically no treatment. Nevertheless the situation is far from hopeless.

A number of able and enthusiastic investigators are engaged in the study of malaria, and already a large amount of knowledge has been obtained. Before long we may expect that the entire life-history of the plasmodium will have been traced and its nature and habits completely elucidated. And that, for the plasmodium, will be the beginning of the end. In medicine a complete knowledge of the

nature and causation of a disease is the necessary antecedent to the production of an efficient remedy, and given the knowledge, the remedy may be confidently expected.

I shall conclude this brief and necessarily imperfect sketch of a most important subject, with a few words on the treatment at present available.

I have said that there is practically no treatment; and this is almost literally correct. It is true that ague in all forms is generally amenable to treatment by quinine; but then ague is not common on the Gold Coast, and when it occurs is not dangerous.

Again, the simple common remittent of the Gold Coast is slightly controlled by quinine, but the control is very slight and the disease is comparatively harmless. But when we come to the pernicious fevers, to which the immense mortality is due, we find that there is no specific treatment whatever. Quinine, the only specific advanced, has not sufficient effect upon the disease (if it has any at all) to prevent it from killing the patient; and a remedy which will not preserve the patient's life cannot be said to be an efficient one. Many lives are saved by symptomatic treatment: by treatment designed to avert anæmia, to prevent the kidneys from becoming choked with solid debris, etc., but of specific treatment, by which the disease itself can be combated, there is, as I have said, none. Even where it can be used with effect, quinine is (in the large doses which are necessary to make any impression on even a mild remittent) an excessively objectionable drug, for

besides the distressing dyspepsia and gastric irritation that it produces and its depressing effect on the heart, the suspicion that it acts injuriously on the nervous system and especially on the organ of hearing, is probably not without justification.

It is not unimportant to observe that there is a great difference in the susceptibility of different individuals to malarial disease. Now and again we meet with a person who seems to be absolutely proof against malaria and who enjoys perfect health in the most malarious districts; but these individuals are excessively rare.

More commonly we find men who suffer but slightly from the climate, while again we meet with persons of extreme susceptibility.

The general impression on the Coast is that women are much less susceptible than men, and I think that this is correct even where allowances have been made for the difference in their mode of life. Among men, my experience leads me to believe that the most resistent type is that characterized by fair or "sandy" hair, a red skin and light blue eyes, while the most susceptible type is that which presents a sallow complexion with black hair and dark eyes.

The fact that certain individuals enjoy complete immunity from malarial disease appears to me to be of considerable importance, for it is obvious that if such an immunity could be artificially produced the barrier that has hitherto shut the white man out of Tropical Africa, would be, once for all, removed.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMMERCIAL OUTLOOK

A MORAL Story—Close of the Treasure-hunting Epoch—Possibilities of Development—Natural Products—Gold—Its Profusion—Native Methods of working—Difficulties of the Gold Industry—Transport—Influence of the Climate—Mode of conducting ordinary Trade—Rubber—Timber—Timber-bearing Trees—Kola—Shea Butter—Indigo—Cotton—Changing Conditions of Trade—Exaggerated Ideas of the Value of the Interior—Interior Trade—Effects of the construction of a Railroad—Neglect of Rivers and Water-transport generally—The Volta—The Germans alive to its value.

IN one of those collections of "Tales for the Young" in which there is sprung upon the unsuspecting juvenile a mine of moral precept, I once encountered a story of which the following is the substance.

A certain old man finding (by some process known only to old men in moral stories) that his end was approaching, called his (inevitable) three sons around him and communicated to them the fact that in the vineyard that formed the sole family property there was buried a considerable treasure, but the exact position of this he did not specify. When he had made this gratifying but incomplete communication he died, and the three sons proceeded forth.

with to search the vineyard for the buried wealth. But after much promiscuous digging no treasure came to light, and the three young men then decided to systematically dig over the whole of the vineyard. But even after this was done still no treasure was found, and the disappointment of the young men was only partly allayed by observing an immensely increased fecundity on the part of the vines, a consequence of the thorough turning over of the soil. So great, however, was this increase that it presently dawned upon them that this was the treasure to which their father had alluded, and that they had in fact been the victims of a benevolent practical joke.

The moral of this story may be profitably applied to Tropical Africa in general, and especially to the Gold Coast. By the Europeans who have visited it this region appears to have been at all times regarded as a species of Tom Tiddler's ground, a place where wealth was to be acquired without that expenditure of capital, skill and labour which are necessary for the accumulation of wealth elsewhere.

And the early history of the place to a great extent justified these expectations, for the first adventurers who visited the Gold Coast found it possible to obtain for an absurdly small fraction of their real value such precious commodities as ivory, slaves and gold.

But with the gradual extinction of the African elephant and the better appreciation by the natives of the demand for ivory, the local value of that substance has risen, and a normal price must now be paid for it.

With the extinction of the export slave trade another great source of wealth has escaped the grasp of unscrupulous adventurers, and great has been the commercial decadence of many of the coast towns since the disappearance of that villainous traffic.

The aspect of the gold trade has undergone a complete change. When the first merchant adventurers reached the Gold Coast they found the natives in possession of vast stores of gold which had been accumulating for years (the production being greatly in excess of the consumption), of the value of which they were totally ignorant. By taking advantage of this ignorance on the part of the natives immense quantities of gold were at first obtained at a tithe of its value, and the amount exported from Mina (Elmina) alone was prodigious; but as the accumulated stores diminished and the value of the gold became better understood by the natives, this state of things gradually ceased. Nowadays the export is reduced to the current production and the gold must be purchased for somewhere about its normal value: indeed the value of the metal is so well appreciated by the modern native that his mind now lightly turns to thoughts of adulteration, and his fertile brain has evolved the luminous idea of producing gold dust by the simple expedient of filing a brass rod.

On all sides it becomes evident that the age of the treasure-hunter is past and gone and has given place to a *régime* of legitimate commercial enterprise. Whatever wealth is now to be gathered in the country must be

obtained by the normal expenditure of capital, effort and intelligence. Henceforth the bulk of the gold must be wrung from the quartz by the miners' stamp. The natural productions must be obtained by the labour, direct or indirect, of the Europeans, and the treasure-seeker of the past will be in the future replaced by the miner, the lumberer and the trader.

Such being the case it may be not unprofitable to glance at the possibilities of development presented by the region we have been considering. These, it must be admitted, are somewhat limited, for, unlike the southern part of the continent, which possesses a temperate and fairly healthy climate, Western Tropical Africa shuts its doors firmly and finally against the white settler. Any industry requiring the continued presence of large numbers of Europeans is quite excluded by the pestilential climate, and the possible development is thus practically restricted to the collection of natural indigenous products and barter with the natives. Passing over for the present the latter form of commercial enterprise, we may briefly consider what natural productions the country has to offer to the prospector.

These naturally fall into two sections, mineral and organic.

Of the mineral products by far the most important is gold, and it may be conceded that this is a highly auriferous region. The name bestowed upon the sea-board of this part of Africa by the early adventurers is amply justified by the wide-spread profusion of the precious metal,

for there are few spots either on the coast or in the interior where gold is not to be found. In the little river that enters the sea close to Axim natives may often be seen washing gold from the sandy bed and even from the sand upon the adjacent sea beach, while in the streets of the town itself grains of gold may be seen sparkling on the ground after a shower. I am at present wearing a pair of native-made solitaires which the maker assured me were composed of gold that had been washed from dust swept up in the streets of Cape Coast.

The quantity of gold obtainable varies greatly according to the district: in the eastern portion of the Gold Coast Colony it does not appear to be very plentiful, but in Akem it is so abundant that the ground is honeycombed with native workings, while in Ashanti gold forms the ordinary currency, being distributed in little packets of cotton cloth down to the value of three-pence, or measured in larger amounts by means of tiny scales.

The most highly auriferous portion of this region is, I believe, south-west Jáman, and it is perhaps rather to be regretted that this district has recently passed into the French Protectorate, although there remains in the British territories of Wassau, Ashanti, Akem and Kwahu more gold than is likely to be extracted for some centuries, for the simple methods of extraction in use by the natives are hardly available for Europeans.

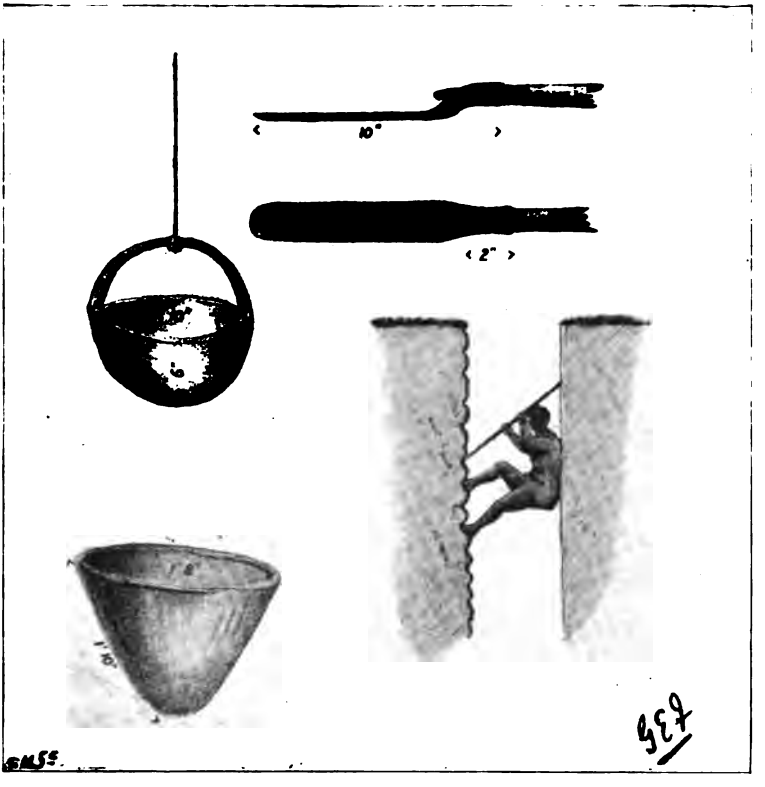
It may be interesting to glance at the native mode of working, and I cannot do better than quote the description

given by the late G. E. Ferguson in his excellent Report on a mission to Atabubu.

"A native miner," he observes, "has but few implements: a long bladed spud or digger, a wooden bucket for baling out the water or hoisting up the stuff, and a bowl for washing or 'vanning', make up the list. These and his method of descending his shaft are shown in the sketch annexed. He rarely makes his shaft more than three feet in diameter. Planting one end of his digger into a recess in the shaft, he places the other end diagonally across the opposite side of the shaft, and supporting himself by it, his foot is placed in another of the recesses. He then lengthens out his body and fixes his back firmly against the side of the shaft. Thus supported, he removes the digger, plants it in another recess below the first and by repeating the operation gets to the bottom of the shaft. A tunnel, which cannot be long, for his neighbour's shaft is only fifteen to twenty feet from him, is next driven.

In some cases there is a quick return—nuggets worth £100 not being rare, as I was informed by the Chief of Essiakwa. From all I can learn the yield is about £2 10s per ton. Mercury is not used, and a quantity of the mineral must be wasted."

From the fact that gold is so abundant, it would appear that a great opening exists for the mining industry. That an opening does exist I am far from denying, but still against the comparative profusion of gold certain serious drawbacks have to be set off.



A NATIVE MINER AND HIS IMPLEMENTS.
(From a drawing by the late G. E. Ferguson.)

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

In the first place there is the difficulty of transport. The ordinary method of land transport in this region consists in the carriage of goods on the heads of porters, or carriers, as they are usually called. This, which is not very efficient for the purposes of ordinary commerce, is entirely unsuitable for the transport of heavy articles such as portions of machinery, and as the gold districts are mostly in hilly or even mountainous regions covered with dense forest, there is the serious initial difficulty of getting the mining plant conveyed to the scene of operations.

The enormous expense which is entailed by this difficulty of transport will be readily understood when it is stated that the whole of the ponderous machinery for the working of the mines has to be carried in fragments on the heads of carriers over many miles of rough mountain and forest paths. Even in the case of mines like that of the now extinct Akankon Company, situated a short distance from the Ankobra river, the difficulty is not much reduced, for there is no landing-stage or pier on the coast, and the machinery has to be conveyed up a not very navigable river in lighters, and these lighters receive their freight in an open roadstead where there is usually a rather heavy sea running.

The waste of money from the destruction or loss of machinery has been very great. At one time the beach at Axim was littered with masses of machinery that had been landed through the surf and then abandoned for want of means of transport: and I was informed that a similar

melancholy sight was to be seen in many parts of the Ankobra river, where lighters full of mining plant lay high and dry on mud-banks on which they had been left stranded by the falling river, and portions of machinery lay rusting on the banks.

The difficulty of transport is, however—theoretically—surmountable, and doubtless if the working of the gold districts could be made to pay liberally it actually would be surmounted.[1] But unfortunately the climate influences the gold industry as unfavourably as it would any other industry in which European labour and superintendence was necessary.

Its influence is felt in several ways. To begin with, each European employee is a source of considerable expense, for besides the high rate of remuneration that is necessary to induce men to risk their lives in this pestilential region, the outward passage at least of each has, as a rule, to be paid, and as each man dies or is invalided this expense has to be reincurred in the case of the one who is sent out to replace him. From this cause the employment of European labourers is hardly practicable, and the much less efficient and satisfactory native labour has to be substituted.

Another unfortunate result of the insalubrity of the

[1] The Government are contemplating the construction of a railway from Takaradi Bay to the mining district. Should this scheme be carried out its influence on the gold-mining industry will be most favourable, although the railway must necessarily be carried on at a loss for some time to come.

climate is the great difficulty in maintaining any continuity in the local management of the industry. Continually gaps are being made by death or invaliding in the managing staff, while those who completely survive the climate are compelled to return on leave to Europe at pretty frequent intervals, so that there is a perpetual change in the directing staff most unfavourable to the success of any commercial enterprise. [1]

The difficulties which surround the gold industry will be felt, as I have said, in an equal or even greater degree in the prosecution of any commercial scheme which requires the local work to be done by Europeans, and especially if the Europeans are required to possess special technical knowledge or skill: and in this category all local manufacturing or agricultural industries would fall. Indeed the idea of making the Gold Coast and its hinterland a field for agricultural enterprise (as has been suggested) appears to me most chimerical, seeing that anything that could be grown in West Africa could be grown as well in the West Indies where Europeans can live and flourish.

[1] The yield of the Gold Coast mines may be judged from the following returns extracted from the reports of the Wassau Mining Company, showing the crushings for the first six months of 1897.

In Jan.	491	tons of ore, yielding	751 1/4	oz. standard gold, value	£2,930.	13.	1
„ Feb.	539 1/2	„	„	„	„	742 1/2	„	„	„	„	2,897.	8.	3
„ Mar.	537	„	„	„	„	643 3/4	„	„	„	„	2,513.	12.	6
„ Apr.	448 1/2	„	„	„	„	547 3/4	„	„	„	„	2,139.	19.	8
„ May	466	„	„	„	„	645 2/3	„	„	„	„	2,521.	12.	11
„ June	394	„	„	„	„	530 9/10	„	„	„	„	2,073.	17.	9
Total	2,876	„	„	„	„	3,861 49/60	oz.	„	„	„	£15,077.	4.	2

It must be remembered that even since the disappearance of the treasure-hunter, commerce has been carried on in West Africa under somewhat exceptional conditions.

The white trader has established his stations, or "factories" as they are locally called, on or near to the coast, and the produce—palm oil, palm kernels, ivory, gold dust etc.—has been collected by the natives and brought by them into the factory compound. Thus all the cost of collection, preparation and transport to the factory has been borne by the natives. When the produce has been thus delivered to the trader it has been purchased by him, usually for money, and this money has been generally spent in the purchase from him of his European imports.

In this manner not only is there a double profit to each transaction—one profit on the produce and another on the goods sold—but the expenses to the trader are limited to the cost of packing and export to Europe of the produce, and import of the home manufactures. The number of Europeans required for trade of this kind is small, nor do they require any considerable previous training; but of course the scope for increase in the number of traders is strictly limited. There are, however, certain directions in which the commerce of the district may be expected to extend, and I shall now briefly notice what appear to me to be the more important openings.

The demand for rubber in this country does not seem likely to diminish, and as this substance could, under favour-

able conditions, be produced in West Africa in large quantities it is possible that a large trade in it may be developed.

At present this trade is attended by two serious drawbacks. In the first place the natives persist in adulterating the raw rubber to such an extent as to enormously diminish its value: and in the second place their method of collection involves the destruction and ultimate extermination of the vines. Whether it will be possible to induce the natives to amend their ways remains to be seen. Having regard to the peculiarities of the African mind, I am disposed to think that it will be, at any rate, a work of considerable time. Given a proper method of collection the trade should be a flourishing one, for the amount of material is very great. All through the forest the vines (*Landolphia*) may be seen in the greatest profusion, and they are not the only rubber-bearing plants: a few days' march to the north of Kumasi I passed through miles of forest consisting almost exclusively of a slender white-barked tree of an average diameter of two feet six inches, which the natives informed me produced an excellent rubber.

At the time of my journey through Ashanti the timber industry was practically non-existent, and on my return I drew the attention of some of the agents of English firms to the possibilities of the forest. Since then a timber trade of some importance has sprung up, and a saw-mill has been erected by Messrs. Swanzy; but the industry is still capable of considerable extension.

The area of the forest in the Gold Coast Hinterland, as will be seen from the accompanying map, is not less than 12,000 square miles, and this forest consists largely of hardwood trees of great size and furnishing timber of considerable value. The peculiarities of growth by which the large forest trees are distinguished have been already referred to, and it has been pointed out that they attain a height of fully two hundred feet, that their trunks are straight and regularly cylindrical, and that lateral branches occur only near to the summit. Now all these peculiarities greatly enhance the value of the timber, for it is evident that from such a tree two hundred feet in height, a solid cylindrical log from ninety to a hundred and twenty feet in length may be obtained. One of the great advantages of this industry is that little European labour is required, and it is not haunted by the transport difficulty.

The forest is a network of rivers—indeed the rivers of the open country are everywhere bordered by forest—and all of these have a good depth of water during the rains, while many are navigable for narrow timber rafts all the year round. On these rivers the logs formed into rafts can be floated down to the sea and, having arrived at the river's mouth, can be drawn through the surf on the bar and out to the ships by a long line. It is generally found advisable to roughly square the logs before putting them on board ship, and this is particularly desirable in the case of *Odúm* wood as the outer portion of the log is almost worthless.

It may be worth while to enumerate a few of the timber trees of the Ashanti forest.

One of the commonest and the most magnificent in appearance is the Bombax or Silk Cotton. The wood of this tree is silvery grey in colour and quite soft, as soft as, or even softer than, deal. It is, however, a very useful wood, easy to work, even in grain, quite free from knots and less fibrous than the soft wood of the conifers.

It is from this wood that the native canoes are almost invariably made, and from this it will be seen that it is moderately strong and resists the effects of immersion in water.

Some of the largest canoes are fully sixty feet in length and wide in proportion, and from these dimensions the size of the logs obtainable may be judged. I believe that the wood of the Bombax is generally regarded as commercially worthless, but I should have imagined that for many purposes it would have been found superior to the knotty and fibrous soft woods that are so largely imported into England.

A tree locally known by its Ochi name—*Papáo* or *Oppapáo*—produces a wood exceedingly like Spanish mahogany. It is not an uncommon tree and it grows to a good size, although it is not so large as the gigantic Bombax. Its wood, under the name of African mahogany, furnishes the bulk of the timber exports.

The most useful wood and that most in demand locally is that of the tree called in Ochi, *Odúm*. This is a very

handsome tree, fully two hundred feet high when full grown and having a maximum girth of thirty feet.

The wood, which is sometimes spoken of as "African teak," is hard and tough. Its colour varies from a light golden brown or even yellow to a deep chestnut.

A tree bearing the Ochi name of *Bano* yields a wood very similar to that of the *Papáo*, but said to be in some respects superior. The *Bano* is of similar dimensions to the *Papáo*.

A tree known as *Seseo* yields a white, not very hard wood, from which, I believe, most of the Ashanti stools are made. It appears to be easy to carve and very suitable for ornamental work, as its delicate colour and close texture render it decidedly handsome when carved and left otherwise untreated. It is also a very durable wood.

A rather small tree called *Chinacho* yields a tough elastic wood of a red colour that is in great demand among the natives for the manufacture of paddles.

Excellent shingles are made by the Basel missionaries and some of the more civilized natives in the Akwapim districts, from the wood of a tree called *Wawa*.

One of the hardest woods produced in the district is that of a smallish tree called *Nókocho* and locally known among the Europeans as ebony. The alburnum is greyish white, excessively hard, tough and heavy. The heart wood is black and very similar to ebony. A somewhat similar wood is yielded by a tree known by the name of *Yoicho*, which bears an edible fruit.

It is not to be supposed that this small list includes by any means the whole of the available timber-bearing trees of West Africa, but it is sufficient to show that there is ample material for the establishment of an extensive trade.

One of the possible industries of the Gold Coast that has been very little, if at all, worked is the cultivation of Kola. Among the natives of Ashanti and Akem there has been for many years a flourishing and important trade in this product, the magnitude of which has been dwelt upon elsewhere, but by the Europeans it has been almost entirely neglected. A short time ago, indeed, there was a small "boom" in Kola and there is still some demand for it in Europe, where it is used in the manufacture of Kola chocolate, Kola wines, and some kinds of biscuits, and as it really possesses some virtue as a nerve stimulant, it has some prospect of a commercial future in this age of neurasthenia. But it is not the European demand for Kola that makes its cultivation desirable on the Gold Coast, for that demand could be easily supplied by the West Indies, but the fact that unlimited quantities of it could be profitably disposed of in the neighbouring African countries. It does not seem to be generally understood by European merchants that the greater part of north-west Africa is inhabited by people to whom the Kola nut is almost a necessity and who are unable to obtain it excepting as an article of trade imported from Ashanti or Senegal. It was this circumstance, as I have elsewhere pointed

out,[1] that gave rise to the commercial importance of Ashanti, and there is no reason why it should not now be turned to the profit of the white men. I was informed by the late Charles Pike, the treasurer of the Gold Coast, that it was quite usual in Lagos for Kola to sell to the Mahommedans at the rate of three pence for a single nut, and in the more remote towns the rate would probably be higher: and seeing that not only is the Gold Coast Colony adjacent to nations who consume, but do not produce, the Kola nut, but that the whole of the immense territories of the Royal Niger Company are inhabited by Kola-consuming peoples, it should be possible to develop a considerable industry.

The tree (*Sterculia acuminata*) which bears the Kola nut is about forty or fifty feet in height. It commences to bear at its fourth or fifth year and in ten years is quite mature.

The annual yield per tree is then from a hundred and twenty to two hundred pounds of "nuts" in two crops, which are gathered in May and June and in October and November.

The seeds or "nuts" consist principally of starch and contain rather more than two per cent of caffeine and some theobromine, and it is to the presence of these latter substances that they owe their stimulating properties.

In addition to the established trades in palm oil, kernels,

[1] P. 477.

and copra, the last being susceptible of considerable extension, various minor departments of commerce suggest themselves as practicable. Such products as Shea butter, indigo, cotton and silk cotton might, if transport were improved, come into the market. Shea butter has, I believe, been exported from Akuse by Messrs. Swanzy, but only in very small quantities. There is, however, an almost unlimited supply of this fine vegetable oil (the chemical stability and high melting-point of which should render it of value in many ways), for when returning towards Ashanti through South-Eastern Jáman we marched for days at a time through country covered almost exclusively with the trees (*Bassia Parkii*).

Indigo I have already described as being manufactured on quite a large scale in Bontúku and elsewhere. It is to be met with in the markets of the interior in the form of cubes about an inch in diameter. As to the quality of the African dye, if I mention that I possess native cloths from Gazári and Bontúku dyed with indigo, which have repeatedly passed unscathed and unchanged through the hands of the British laundress, I shall have triumphantly demonstrated its absolute constancy.

Silk cotton has, I believe, never been tried commercially and would probably be hardly worth exporting, although its extraordinary elasticity makes it valuable as a material for stuffing pillows, mattresses, etc. Cotton grows wild in many districts, and it has been exported rather largely. The native cotton is of poor quality, but, of

course, cultivated varieties, such as the Egyptian, could be grown.

Passing now from the consideration of natural products to that of import trade and barter with the natives, we may notice certain changes in the conditions of trade which have already taken place and are still in progress. The entirely abnormal conditions experienced by the first adventurers who visited the Gold Coast, who could obtain substantial quantities of ivory or gold for a handful of beads or a few worthless gimracks, continued in a more or less modified form until the suppression of the export slave trade. As long as that traffic continued immense profits were to be made with but little regard to ordinary commercial methods, but with its extinction came the beginning of legitimate commerce.

The business of the trader is now for the most part confined to the purchase of produce and the sale of European imports at well-recognised rates; and year by year, as the value of both produce and imported goods becomes better understood by the natives, as the competition between the various European firms grows keener and is accentuated by the increasing number of native trading firms, and as the produce tends to diminish while the imported goods are ever increasing, the margin of profit tends to constantly decrease and the conditions of trade on the Gold Coast to assimilate to those of trade elsewhere.

There exists an impression, which is indeed widespread even among well-informed persons, that when the interior is

"opened up" to European trade an immense accession of prosperity will result. The fact that it has been found profitable to trade with the natives on the coast has led to the inference that it will be found equally profitable to trade with the natives of the interior, and this view has in many cases become exaggerated into a belief that the interior is of much more commercial importance than the coast.

This belief is by no means justified by the facts. In the first place it is to be noted that every mile of distance from the coast adds enormously to the cost of carriage. For example, the cost of conveying a ton of goods from Liverpool to Cape Coast is only about £ 3, whereas to convey it from Cape Coast to Kumasi, or *vice versâ*, (about a hundred and twenty miles as the crow flies) would cost from £ 22 to £ 27.

Now it must be obvious that with this excessive cost of transport it would be quite impracticable in the interior to receive in payment for goods any produce other than gold or ivory, since the white trader would pay more than its total value for its conveyance to the port of shipment; and this circumstance would at once limit the scope of trade, since few natives possess either gold or ivory, and are only enabled to become purchasers of European goods by the sale of produce.

Moreover, in order to cover the enormous cost of transport, European goods would have to be sold at greatly advanced prices, and these prices would not be paid by the poor and parsimonious natives.

But, it will be replied, this extra cost of transport will be done away with as soon as a railway is constructed and the principal difficulty of interior trade removed.

This, indeed, is not quite true, for a railway would only reduce the cost of transport to places in its immediate vicinity: but assuming it to be so, it appears to me that the native and not the white trader would be the principal gainer. There are certain things that the native, even in the far interior, has been in the habit of getting from the white man, the most important being guns, gunpowder, gun-flints and spirits. Guns—long flint-lock weapons with red-painted stocks, locally know as "Dane guns" and sold to the natives at an astoundingly low price—are in universal use. Even in Jáman, not only were the King's troops furnished with them, but hunters living in remote villages swaggered about with these unwieldy weapons, muzzle forward, on their shoulders. The burden of importing these articles has hitherto fallen upon the natives. When a king or chief has required guns and ammunition he has sent down to the coast a number of his followers to make the purchase and convey the goods home, while isolated persons have been supplied by native middle-men who have travelled to the coast and invested in a stock which they have retailed on their return to the interior. The place of the native and itinerant trader would, no doubt, be taken by the railway if one existed, and there is no doubt that a certain amount of trade would spring up along the line and especially at the terminus, but it is very doubtful

if there would ever be enough to justify the great initial outlay or even furnish a substantial portion of the working expenses.

In short I believe the interior to be, as far as the white man is concerned, a delusion: its inhabitants appear to be capable of supplying nearly all their own wants; they do not seem to want European imports nor do they appear to have anything to give in return for them.

When we consider the extreme anxiety that has been shown for some years past, to obtain the advantages of a railroad to connect the sea-board with the interior, it appears somewhat strange that no attempt has been made to improve the means of water transport, or to furnish any kind of quay or landing-place. Along the whole three hundred miles of coast there is, with the solitary exception of Elmina, no place where it is possible either for passengers or goods to be landed otherwise than on an open beach exposed to a roaring surf. Even at Elmina, the little harbour in the Beya Creek where, in the days of old Jean Barbot, vessels used to lie beside the quay to unload, is now in a state of decay and is never entered except by a surf-boat or an occasional man-of-war's gig.

Nor is the condition of the inland water-ways much better.

A glance at the accompanying map will show that the whole of the Gold Coast and its Hinterland is penetrated by a network of rivers varying in size from the insignificant Sekúm to the lordly Volta. All of these rivers are subject to two great disadvantages: they are cut off from the sea

by a bar which is in most cases impracticable for any kind of craft, and they are subject to immense variations in depth in the different seasons, being deep and swift during the rains, and shallow and sluggish during the dry season. Moreover, several of them are considerably obstructed by rocks, rapids and even falls. Yet notwithstanding these drawbacks, much could be done to increase their navigability with great advantage to trade. For instance, when at Winneba, I was informed by some native traders that since the river Ainsu had ceased to be navigable for canoes, much less palm oil and kernels had been brought to the town: and on examining the river I found it to be obstructed by snags and choked with drift-wood, all of which could have been removed without difficulty and the channel reopened.

By far the most important water-way of the Gold Coast is the Volta or Firau, a truly magnificent stream which rises far up in Moshi and runs a course extending over six degrees of latitude. From its mouth to Akuse it is navigable all the year round, although when the water is at its lowest there are many shoals: at Kpong there are rapids which the natives ascend in canoes, but which are impassable for larger vessels. From Kpong to Krake the river seems to be almost impracticable in the dry season by reason of the number of portages, but the upper river beyond Sálaga appears to afford excellent navigation all the year round, and when the river is full its entire length is navigable.

THE UPPER VOLTA AT YAJI.

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The Volta bar is generally regarded as impassable for vessels of any size, but it was successfully crossed by Messrs. Swanzy's steamer "Spider" which entered the river in (I think) 1888.

The value of this great water-way, which is so little considered by the British Government, is fully understood by the Germans, who insisted that the boundary between Togoland and the Gold Coast Colony should be so arranged as to place a portion of the left bank in German territory.

THE END.

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